

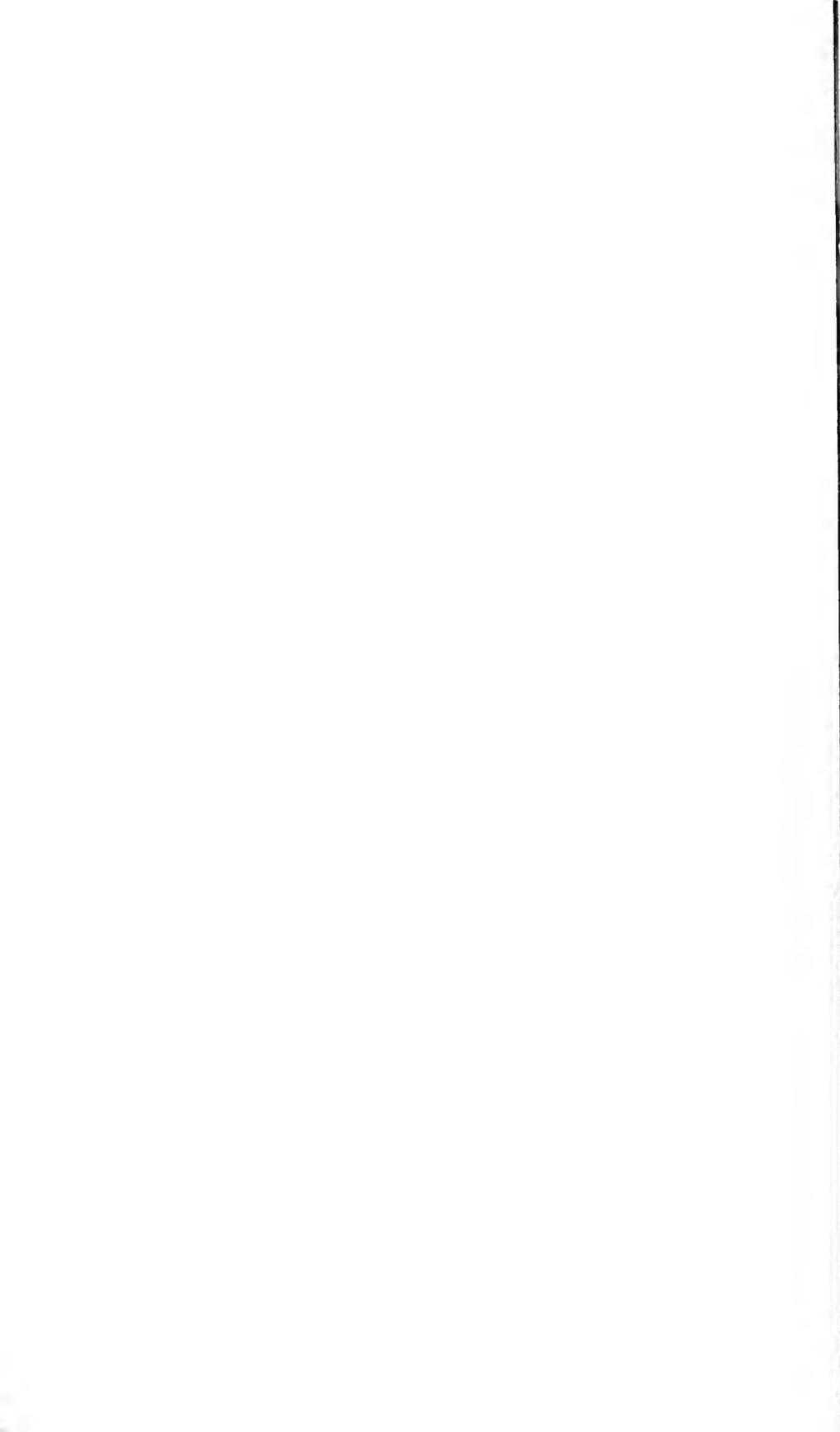
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# THE HISTORY OF

# CONSTITUTIONAL PROGRESS

DURING THE REIGN OF OXFEN VICTORY

1837-1887



G. O. BELLEWES AND W. H. DEVENISH

OF THE MIDDLE TEMPLE GARRISERS-AT-LAW

OXFORD

S. ROWBOTTOM & SON.

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LITERARY SETS

PREFACE.

The following pages are intended to supply those who have no time for elaborate study with a concise and simple account of the achievements of the Tory party, of the continuity of its principles, and the uprightness of its motives.

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# PART I.—MIDDLE-CLASS GOVERNMENT.

1837-41.

## THE WHIGS IN OFFICE.

### *Historical Retrospect.*

IT is obvious that no one can properly appreciate the nature and antecedents of the two great parties in this country without some acquaintance with the history of the 18th century. History does not, as Radicals so readily assume, begin with the Reform Bill of 1832. The essential weaknesses of Liberalism are distinctly traceable in the Whig party under Fox.

In 1717, the Whigs had comfortably settled into office for 25 years. Although the language of HAMPDEN and PYM was ever in their mouths, at heart they were an aristocratic and oligarchical party. The Hanoverian line was not yet acclimatised, so to speak, in England, and in consequence of the weakness and unpopularity of the Monarch, the great Whig families engrossed all power. By the easy method of representing their opponents as Jacobites, they kept in their own hands all the power of the Sovereign. The ideal government of the Whigs was, as Lord BEACONFIELD said, a "Venetian Oligarchy."

The Tories, though they did not pretend to be democratic, were yet largely drawn from a class more in touch with the people, the well-to-do country squires and middle-class landed proprietors. Their ideal was that of a popular monarch who should be the leader of his people, and this ideal was embodied in BOLINGBROKE's phrase "a patriot king." WALPOLE'S

Ministry reformed no grievance, passed no beneficial Measures, did nothing to carry into effect what few democratic principles the Whigs might once have held. Bribery in the House of Commons, mis-government in Ireland and in Scotland, and discontented apathy in England were the distinguishing features of Whig supremacy.

The elder PITT, the "great commoner," aroused National enthusiasm, and attracted towards the Tories the sympathy and confidence of the people. GEORGE III., with all his faults, was a popular monarch in the main, and the Whig oligarchs, with some few exceptions, remained out in the cold until 1783, when Fox, by an unprincipled coalition with Lord NORTH, secured what he anticipated would be a permanent majority.

In 1784, the younger PITT smote the Whigs hip and thigh, 160 of them lost their seats, and the theory of an Oligarchy with a nominal Sovereign at the head disappeared once and for all from English politics. PITT may be considered as the first progressive Statesman of the last century. A follower of ADAM SMITH he to some extent anticipated the theories of VILLIERS. He was in favour both of electoral Reform and of Catholic emancipation—the two rocks on which the Tory party was subsequently to suffer shipwreck,—and he brought an enlightened and original intellect to bear on the financial affairs of the country.

By means of the Act of Union, which was associated in his mind with Catholic emancipation and equality of commercial privileges, he hoped to destroy the effects of Whig misgovernment in Ireland; but the French Revolution came upon him in the midst of his labour, and he had to turn from internal reform to the task of resisting a foreign foe. The Whigs, showing a truly 'liberal' preference for philanthropy rather than patriotism, and considering the 'rights of man' more important than the privileges of Englishmen, utterly discredited themselves by a factious opposition.

The firm and patriotic conduct of the Tories during the Napoleonic wars gave them a large and legitimate influence in the country, but they suffered from a serious disadvantage. CANNING, it is true, still retained many popular ideas, but such was not the case with CASTLE-REAGH, WELLINGTON, or LIVERPOOL. They were honest, upright, practical men, able administrators, acquainted with affairs, and very jealous of the honour of England abroad, but their minds were so warped by long opposition to revolution that they disliked even moderate reform.

On the death of CANNING, his friends, who really represented the more democratic views of PITT himself, were driven out of the Duke of WELLINGTON's Government, and gravitated towards the Whig Opposition. The Tory Administration lost the popular favour by dealing prematurely with the Catholic question in 1829, and at the same time destroyed their reputation for consistency; for the ministers, especially PEEL, who had obtained the nick-name of "Orange PEEL," were strongly pledged against any concession. Thus, whilst the Whigs were increased by Tory seceders and Radical recruits, and aided by the Irish

members, the Tories were discontented with their leaders, divided in opinion, and weakened in numbers.

Even under these circumstances they might have escaped the fate which was awaiting them if they had only been prepared with some moderate measure of Reform, but the Duke of WELLINGTON, with a want of the judgment he sometimes displayed in politics, committed them to a hopeless opposition. The Whigs came in and gained the ear of the King, who dissolved the Parliament which had rejected the Reform Bill, expressing his willingness to go down to Westminster in a hackney coach if necessary. The Whigs, or rather the Reformers, came back with a majority and the Bill was carried after a sharp struggle.

We must, however, remember that the party which carried the Reform Bill cannot strictly be called Liberal, for it contained such staunch Conservatives as the late Lord DERBY and Lord GEORGE BENTINCK. There can be no doubt that popular feeling was in favour of the Bill, but at the same time a reasonable case can, as Mr. GLADSTONE has admitted, be made out for the old Constitution. It was not hopelessly corrupt and rotten, as is so often reiterated; it contained anomalies, but rested on sound general principles. The idea of the defenders of the unreformed Parliament was that all classes should be represented in the House of Commons; the aristocracy were represented by nominated members; the scot and lot voters were a democratic element, and the middle class returned most of the members.

#### *Supremacy of the Commercial Classes under the Reform Bill.*

Now, it is often forgotten that while the Reform Bill struck at the aristocracy above, it also

struck at the democracy below. Whilst it disfranchised the rotten boroughs it also disfranchised the scot and lot voters. At Preston and other places the franchise was nearly universal. This franchise the Reformers would have swept away, proposing to limit the right of voting to £10 householders and upwards. That this wholesale disfranchisement of the working-classes was not effected was due to the Tories under Sir ROBERT PEEL, but even in its modified provisions the Reform Bill was adverse to the interests of labour, and centred the power in the hands of the commercial classes.

Nor was this Middle-class Parliament friendly to the poor. One of its first Acts was to produce the New Poor Law of 1834, an Act which was intended to abolish outdoor relief entirely, and failed of its purpose only owing to the Tory opposition. This law destroyed the kindly and inexpensive allowances to the destitute, which enabled them to tide over bad times, and set up the union in place of the parish, the poor law guardians in place of the justices of the peace. No Act has done so much to estrange and embitter the agricultural labourer as this Liberal Measure, based on the heartless views of political economy which have been the Liberal's creed and the poor man's curse.

The new electors returned an overwhelming majority of Reformers to the new Parliament, and the Conservatives barely numbered 150; but they gained a hundred seats at the General Election of December 30th, 1834, and they also enjoyed the support of some 50 moderate Liberals. At the Election of 1837 the numbers were 336 Whigs to 322 Tories; the change being due to the incapacity of the Whig Ministers who were quite inexperienced in affairs. The great Reform Ministry, led by Lord AL-

THORPE, barely lasted two years before Lord ALTHORPE, remarking "the pig's killed," resigned and, on his father's death, went to the Upper House. Without him, the Whigs, supported by 400 members, were literally unable to patch up a Ministry.

### *The Political Importance of the Victorian Era.*

At the QUEEN'S accession, therefore, we find that the Tories had nearly recovered from the defeat of 1832, while the Whigs had lost prestige in the nation at large; but though on the one hand everything pointed to a Tory reaction, on the other there was every prospect of a severe conflict of class interests in the immediate future, nor were the working classes content to accept the powerless position to which they had been politically reduced by the Reform Bill. The Chartist agitation was rapidly growing in power, but the political dangers were lessened from the fact that the industries of the country were showing signs of reviving activity. The political importance of the Victorian Era lies, indeed, not less in the vast changes that have taken place in the conditions of labour and commerce, aided by the marvellous developments of practical science, than in the steady advance of the nation on the lines of "Constitutional Progress." So far from this happy result being due to the triumph of Liberal principles, it is rather the reward of the mutual forbearance of all classes, and of that sound common sense of the people which led them to trust in the wisdom of experience rather than in the philosophy of theorists.

Looking back from the close of the 50th year of Her MAJESTY'S reign, events are seen in their true proportions, no longer distorted by selfish interests and unworthy motives, and it is a fitting moment to pass in review the principal

scenes and the chief actors on the stage of political life during the last half-century.

*Position of Parties at the Queen's Accession.*

On June 20th, 1837, WILLIAM IV. died and VICTORIA succeeded to the throne. Her youth, her beauty, and her intelligence created everywhere a generous and national enthusiasm. She found a Whig Ministry in office, but scarcely in power. Sir ROBERT PEEL had been defeated by a resolution on the Irish tithe, moved by Lord JOHN RUSSELL on April 6th, 1835. The resolution was to the effect "that the surplus revenue of the Irish Church should be applied for the education of all classes of Christians." It was carried by 262 votes to 237. In order to give effect to the vote of the House, the Whig Government had spent their time in introducing badly-drawn Irish Tithe Bills, each containing a clause appropriating the estimated surplus, but as Sir ROBERT PEEL showed conclusively that, under the Ministerial scheme, there would be no surplus but on the contrary a deficit, the Bills were all of them still-born. The Whig Ministry contained only three men of eminence. Lord JOHN RUSSELL—nicknamed by SYDNEY SMITH "the Lycurgus of the Lower House," and by Lord LYTTON "dawdling Johnny"—was leader of the House of Commons. He had acquired a great reputation by the Reform Bill, but had scarcely sufficient ability to support it. His presence was small and insignificant, his manners cold and repulsive, whilst his voice was so weak and his delivery so bad that it was barely possible to hear him. On the other hand, he was a good debater and a fair man of letters—qualifications which justified the Duke of WELLINGTON in saying "Lord John is a host in himself." His charac-

ter is cleverly sketched in the following lines from Lord LYTTON's *New Timon* :—

Next cool, and all unconscious of reproach,  
Comes the calm "Johnny who upset the  
coach."\*

How formed to lead, if not too proud to  
please—

His fame would fire you but his manners  
freeze.

Like or dislike, he does not care a jot;  
He wants your vote but your affection not.  
Yet human hearts need sun as well as oats,  
So cold a climate plays the deuce with  
votes.

And while his doctrines ripen day by day,  
His frost-nipp'd party pines itself away;—  
From the starved wretch it's own loved  
child we steal!

And "Free Trade" chirrups on the lap of  
Peel!

He was supported in the House by Lord PALMERSTON. PALMERSTON's character and abilities were not yet mature, but his foreign policy was the one creditable performance in the gloomy annals of the MELBOURNE Ministry. He had, however, made one serious mistake. By furthering the severance of Belgium from Holland he prevented the formation of a strong peaceful kingdom, and exposed two tempting prizes to the greed of Germany and France. His easy self-confidence and reckless gaiety at this period of his career called from DISRAELI the sarcastic remark that he was like "a footman on easy terms with his mistress."

Lord MELBOURNE "is a mild, middle-aged, lounging man—gifted with no ordinary abilities, cultivated with no ordinary care, but the victim of sauntering" so writes DISRAELI. To this description we may add that he was a man so good natured that he conveyed with his own hand the KING's commission to the Duke of WELLINGTON to form a ministry in 1834. There were however limits to his good nature, and his reply to one of BROUGHAM's slashing speeches is terribly cutting.—"You have

\* Lord GREY's Ministry in 1834.

heard the eloquent speech of the noble lord and I leave your lordships to consider what must be the nature and strength of the objections which prevent any Government from availing themselves of the services of such a man." SYDNEY SMITH is probably right in describing him as a sensible man who liked to pose as a frivolous and indifferent political *roué*. His manner to the QUEEN was perfect, a happy mixture of the affection of a father, and the deference of a courtier.

The opposition the Whigs had to face at this time was tremendous. In the Lower House there were STANLEY, the "Rupert of debate," PEEL, the master of Parliamentary tactics, and Sir JAMES GRAHAM, a first-rate administrator; not to speak of GLADSTONE and SIDNEY HERBERT. Sir JAMES GRAHAM is an instance of the boy being father to the man. He used to play at being a statesman when at school. The stone used to be on view in his native village from which he harangued his playmates. In the Upper House they had to deal with a candid friend in BROUGHAM, and a persistent critic in LYNDHURST.

Eloquent and sarcastic, Lord LYNDHURST shook the Whigs seriously by his reviews of the session delivered in '36 and '37. Perhaps no man has ever so swayed the House of Lords. How the Whigs hated him and how bad were their manners, the following description taken from the *Morning Herald*, February 23rd, 1837, will show—"Mr. Shiel worked himself up to his full fury, gesticulating, foaming, screeching in his loudest tones. He denounced the man—pointing full at Lyndhurst sitting at the bar of the House—who had dared to call the Irish aliens. A universal howl of execration rose from ministerial benches as all eyes turned in the direction of Shiel's finger; the more excitable members started to their feet, and for a

moment it seemed as if they would precipitate themselves on the object of their fury. He, in the meantime, sat through the storm unmoved. With steady eye and unaltered mien, he gazed on the howling mob in front of him."

LYNDHURST was also a man of independent judgment. Remonstrated with once for opposing a measure to which PEEL had offered no objections, he replied, "Peel, what's Peel to me? damn Peel."

The Whigs took every possible advantage of their official position towards the QUEEN. They surrounded her with their wives, sisters, daughters, and aunts, they abused her inexperience in order to drag her into party politics, and, no other cry being available, they went to the country, in 1837, as "the QUEEN'S friends." The meanness of this act and the want of principle it showed has been the subject of denunciation by Liberals ever since, from GEORGE TREVELYAN to HARRIET MARTINEAU.

*Register! Register!! Register!!!*

PEEL delivered his last election speech in August. He recognised how futile for immediate purposes was any mere popular clamour. Voices without votes affected him little, and his new reading of the Reformers' maxim, "Agitate, agitate, agitate," well marks the passing of political power into the hands of a well-defined and comparatively limited class. Now began that "battle of the polls" to which DISRAELI afterwards so sarcastically referred, and PEEL turned the energy of his followers to the creation of voters, closing his speech with these words of advice, "Register, register, register." It was not very magnanimous advice, nor does it show much forethought, this preference given to organisation over principles, this creation of votes rather than opinions, but probably no great Statesman was

ever so wanting in foresight as PEEL. The facts before him he saw clear and exact, but he appeared to have little grasp of future possibilities. On the other hand it was safe, practical, and suited to the needs of the moment.

### *Disraeli's Prophecy.*

The QUEEN's name and popularity just pulled the Whigs through; their 332 members were composed of 152 Whigs, 100 Liberals, and 80 Radicals. Amongst the new members was DISRAELI, who was returned for Maidstone, and made his first speech in December, 1837. He had previously quarrelled with O'CONNELL, who taunted him with being descended from the impenitent thief, and was therefore shouted down by the Liberator's henchmen. PEEL expressed a high opinion of the speech to DISRAELI, and it is very hard to say why it was considered a failure. Some of the phrases, such as "a political duel in which recourse was had to the safe arbitrament of blank cartridge," are very good. He sat down with the well-known prophecy—"I am not at all surprised at the reception I have experienced. I will sit down now, but the time will come when you shall hear me."

### *The 'Do-Nothing' Government.*

In 1838 the Whigs sent to the Upper House their usual Irish Tithe and Irish Corporation Bills, but, as usual, the Measures crumbled away on the touch of criticism. They also allowed Lord DURHAM, the Governor-General of Canada, a man of resource and ability, to be censured in a small House by 54 to 36. He was so mortified that he came home to die of a broken heart. It is to Lord DURHAM that we owe the present wise and satisfactory settlement in Canada. He was a strong Liberal and an ardent reformer, but he was sacrificed to BROUGHAM's vengeance by a Go-

vernment which could not even protect its own servants. The miserable state of the Government in 1839 is well described in the following verses by PRAED:—

Sure none should better know how sweet  
The tenure of official seat  
Than one who every Session buys  
At such high rate the gaudy prize;  
One who for this so long has borne  
The scowl of universal scorn.  
And truth to say it must be pleasant  
To be a Minister at present:  
To make believe to guide the realm  
Without a hand upon the helm.  
To save the Church and save the Crown  
By letting others pull them down;  
In short, to earn the people's pay  
By doing nothing every day.

### *The Bed-chamber Plot.*

The fact was that in "doing nothing" lay their only way of safety. They could command just enough votes to be safe from a vote of censure, but as soon as they went outside the beaten track of tithes and corporations, they were liable to defeat. This at last occurred in May; the Government brought in a Bill to suspend the Constitution of Jamaica, a colony at that time containing 400,000 white inhabitants with a revenue of about half a million. The island was to be governed by a despotic governor for five years because the House of Assembly declined to abolish negro apprenticeship. PEEL made an able speech consisting chiefly of an *argumentum ad hominem*. How, he asked, would the English Parliament like to be judged as strictly? The Bill was only carried by 284—279, and the Ministry resigned. The QUEEN sent for PEEL, telling him that she was sorry to part with her late advisers but begging him to form a new Administration. Observing that the QUEEN was entirely surrounded by Whig ladies, PEEL proposed to charge nine ladies of the bed chamber, amongst them being Lady NORMANBY, and a sister of Lord MORPETH, both in-

triguing political women. That PEEL was constitutionally right is undoubted, but the young QUEEN could hardly be expected to know this, nor did Lord JOHN RUSSELL enlighten her on the question. The result was that she forwarded to PEEL the following note. "The Queen, having considered the proposal made to her by Sir Robert Peel cannot consent to adopt a course contrary to usage and repugnant to herself." PEEL thereupon declined to proceed further in the matter, and the Whigs returned to office amidst roars of laughter. They had taken shelter, it was said, behind the petticoats of their wives, they had returned to power holding on to their sisters' apron strings. Weak enough before, the Whigs were now considered unprincipled and ridiculous. BROUGHAM's criticism, though strong, is just. "I little thought to have heard it said by Whigs of 1839, 'let us rally round the Queen; never mind the Commons, never mind measures; throw principles to the dogs; leave pledges unredeemed; but, for God's sake, rally round the Throne!'" It has been suggested that PEEL was hardly sincere in taking up this point, and that he did not really wish for office at this date, but it must be remembered that in private life he was stiff, awkward, and constrained. The Duke of WELLINGTON truly said, "I have no small talk, and Peel has no manners." Probably, PEEL did not wish to expose himself to the sharp tongues of Whig ladies at Court.

#### *Spirited Instructions.*

In 1840 the energy of Lord PALMERSTON put a little life into the dying Government. By his able diplomacy he check-mated France, drove back MEHEMET ALI, and saved the Turkish Empire, taking Acre by force. His pluck and courage excited general admiration, and his dispatches are good read-

ing for Englishmen at a time of timid diplomacy like the present. Here are his bold instructions to the Ambassador at Paris, Sept. 22, 1840, "If Thiers again threatens you, tell him that if France throws down the gauntlet we shall not refuse to pick it up, and if she begins a war she will to a certainty lose her ships, her commerce, and her colonies before she sees the end of it; that her army of Algiers will cease to cause any anxiety, and that Mehemet Ali will just be chucked into the Nile."

#### *A Discreditable Intrigue.*

But the Government derived no credit from this policy, and, in fact, looked upon it with disfavour. Sir HENRY BULWER, afterwards Lord DALLING, was *chargé d'affaires* at Paris in 1840, and he accidentally learned that Lord PALMERSTON would be severely attacked at the next Cabinet, and that, in fact, he would be compelled to resign. The information came from a Frenchman who obviously got it in London, and Sir HENRY BULWER wrote to Lord PALMERSTON telling him what he had to expect. At the next Cabinet Council a savage attack was made on his foreign policy, quite in accordance with the information. Lord PALMERSTON got up, read out Sir HENRY BULWER's letter, and pointed out that it was disgraceful that an unfriendly Court like France should be informed of what would take place in the Cabinet respecting Foreign Affairs before he, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, was acquainted with it. His opponents, covered with shame at the detection of their intrigues, gave way, and the matter dropped.

#### *Whig Jobbery and Defeat.*

Lord JOHN RUSSELL, who, at any emergency, was wanting neither in energy nor in ability, determined on a bold stroke for power. The

Anti-Corn Law League, formed in 1838, had already made so much way by 1839 that MACAULAY remarked, "The cry for Free Trade in corn seems very formidable. If the Ministers play their game well, they may now either triumph completely, or retire with honour." The strenuous labours of COBDEN and BRIGHT had created and fostered a perceptible feeling on the subject. Of this feeling RUSSELL determined to take advantage, and, in the Session of 1841, he announced his intention of moving a resolution relating to the trade in corn. But the Government had opposed the Free Trade motion of Mr. VILLIERS, the father of Free Trade, in 1839, Lord MELBOURNE describing Repeal of the Corn Laws as the maddest scheme he had ever heard of, and the country saw in Lord JOHN RUSSELL's resolution a mere dodge to save a tottering Cabinet. Moreover, Sir ROBERT PEEL was too astute a politician to allow the Ministry to go to the country on the cry of cheap bread.

In May, 1841, RUSSELL brought forward a budget showing a deficit of £2,101,370, and was beaten by 317—281. The House, however, observed with mingled amusement and indignation that RUSSELL, taking no notice of his defeat, proposed to take the question of the Corn Laws on the 4th of June, but Sir ROBERT PEEL, seeing that his time was come, anticipated him by moving a direct vote of censure. In a calm and dispassionate speech he reviewed the Government policy, rebuking them for ignoring the recent vote of the House, and the motion was carried on May 31st by 312 to 311. Ministers elected to appeal to the Country, but before the election the Whigs further injured their chances by a gross job. They ejected Lord PLUNKET, a man universally respected, from the Chancellorship of Ireland, and put in his place Sir JOHN CAMPBELL, the Attorney-General, merely in order that the latter might get a pension and a peerage by holding the office for a few weeks.

1841-45.

## SIR ROBERT PEEL IN POWER.

### *The Character of Peel.*

THE success of the Tory party at the polls was signal and complete, and the eyes of all men were turned towards Sir ROBERT PEEL. He had already firmly established his claims to confidence both as a practical reformer and as a constructive Statesman, and he could boast that he was not only the "leader of the country gentlemen of England," but a trusted friend of the com-

mercial classes. He belonged by birth to the new aristocracy of wealth which sprang from the progress of manufactures, his grandfather having been a cotton spinner who had risen to affluence by the use of the "jenny." When PEEL was summoned home by King WILLIAM IV. in 1835, it was said that "the King had sent for the son of a cotton spinner to Rome, in order to make him Prime Minister of England." "Did I feel that," asked PEEL in his speech at Mer-

chant Tailors' Hall, "by any means a reflection on me? Did that make me at all discontented with the state of the laws and institutions of the country? No; but does it not make me, and does it not make you, gentlemen, do all you can to preserve to other sons of other cotton spinners the same opportunities, by the same system of laws under which the country has so long flourished, of arriving by the same honourable means at the like distinction?" Throughout his life he was remarkable for unfailing industry and perseverance. He had barely attained his majority when, in 1809, his father procured for him a seat at Cashel, and he gained exceptional opportunities of studying political questions by his admission at so early an age to an assembly in which sat CANNING, WILBERFORCE, HUSKISSON, ROMILLY, GRAT-TAN, CASTLEREAGH, and BROUGHAM. He made his way first to respect, and then to influence, by the wealth of his information and his power of clear exposition.

The career of no great politician, with the obvious exception of Mr. GLADSTONE, presents more seeming inconsistencies than PEEL's. Of some of his greatest measures it must be admitted that they represented the triumph of the principles which he was pledged to oppose. Yet it is unjust to call him a Liberal in Tory clothing. No man was more attached in principle to the established institutions of the country. He wished to maintain what he found in existence, and in approaching any great subject he was slow and cautious. But he readily surrendered what he thought it impossible to defend. "The one reform associated with the name of Grey," writes Mr. SPENCER WALPOLE, "was exceeded in importance by the six great reforms which this country owes to Peel. In 1819 Peel reformed the currency; in 1823 he reformed the Criminal

Code; in 1829 he emancipated the Roman Catholics; in 1842 he reformed the Tariff; in 1843 he reformed the Banking system; in 1846 he repealed the Corn Laws. Who is that Minister whose admirers can boast that his name can be associated with six reforms so beneficial and so enduring as these?" Mr. ABRAHAM HAYWARD aptly compared the mind of Peel to a clock, which is silent until it strikes *at the hour*. PEEL cannot fairly be placed in the first rank of British Statesmen. He had not the original genius or the lofty patriotism of a PITT or a BEACONSFIELD; but in the "Reform" period he played a necessary part. "How," asked the Duke of WELLINGTON, "is the King's Government to be carried on in a Reformed Parliament?" The answer was supplied by PEEL.

*His efforts to stem the current of Radical Revolution.*

The new era of middle-class government was not the time for the development of the spirit of popular enthusiasm which enabled DISRAELI to win his triumphs of later years. The true mission of the Tory leader in the first decade of the reign was to aid reform by frustrating revolution, to construct, on the foundation of the Constitutional feeling and commercial interests of the middle-classes, a moderate party which should be Conservative in the best sense of the word. In this work PEEL completely succeeded. The country had to thank him, as Lord JOHN RUSSELL admitted, for the spirit of moderation which he infused into the legislation of the Reformed Parliament; his party had to thank him for the guidance which made the Conservatives as strong as they had been before the Reform Bill.

For the display of PEEL's talents the House of Commons was the proper sphere. "One cannot say

of Sir Robert Peel," says DISRAELI, " notwithstanding his unrivalled powers of despatching affairs, that he was the greatest Minister that this country ever produced; because, twice placed at the helm, and on the second occasion with the Court and the Parliament equally devoted to him, he never could maintain himself in power. Nor, notwithstanding his consummate parliamentary tactics, can he be described as the greatest party leader that ever flourished among us, for he contrived to destroy the most compact, powerful, and devoted party that ever followed a British Statesman. Certainly, notwithstanding his great sway in debate, we cannot recognise him as our greatest orator, for in many of the supreme requisites of oratory he was singularly deficient. But what he really was, and what posterity will acknowledge him to have been, is the greatest member of Parliament that ever lived."

#### *His Influence in the House.*

In private, PEEL's stiff and artificial manners were a hindrance to the exercise of the qualities which gain the affections of a party; but in the House of Commons, where hauteur takes the form of dignity and a ponderous style is often impressive, he was at his best. In spite of what DISRAELI called the "awkward habit" of looking askance, and the "fatal defect" of a long upper lip and a compressed mouth, his comely presence and frank expression lent a charm to his speeches. "The oftener you heard him speak," writes Lord DALLING, "the more his speaking gained upon you. Addressing the House several times in the night upon various subjects, he always seemed to know more than anyone else about each of them, and to convey to you the idea that he thought he did so. His language was not usually striking, but it

was always singularly correct, and gathered force with the development of his argument. He never seemed occupied with himself. His effort was evidently directed to convince you, not that he was eloquent, but that he was right."

#### *The composition of his Cabinet.*

On the assembling of the new Parliament, a vote of want of confidence in the already discredited Whig Ministry was carried in both Houses, and Sir ROBERT PEEL was called upon to form a Cabinet. Lord LYNDHURST, then at the zenith of his fame as a lawyer and a statesman, became Chancellor. Lord STANLEY was Colonial Secretary, and Sir JAMES GRAHAM—whom Mr. GLADSTONE has lately called "a true genius of administration"—Home Secretary. They, with Lord RIPON, were seceders from Lord GREY's party. The Duke of BUCKINGHAM, a strong representative of the agricultural party, at first took office, but resigned in a few months. Lord ABERDEEN was Foreign Secretary, and the Duke of WELLINGTON had a seat in the Cabinet without office. Among the Ministers outside the Cabinet were Lord LINCOLN, Mr. SIDNEY HERBERT, and Mr. GLADSTONE. The new Ministers enjoyed a reputation for administrative ability which their tenure of office entirely justified.

#### *Peel's Financial Policy.*

The financial condition of the country demanded early attention. Under the Whigs the national revenue had for several years shown a deficiency, and Sir ROBERT PEEL was not inaccurately described as "Official Assignee in Bankruptcy" of his country's resources.

Commercial depression had affected almost every class in the kingdom. In 1842 the number of paupers had risen to 1,429,000, that is to say, nearly double the

present proportion. The ranks of the Chartists were swelled by the universal discontent. The country was distracted by fierce quarrels between the agriculturists and the Anti-Corn Law League. Neither the Tory nor the Whig leaders were as yet prepared to advocate the absolute repeal of the Corn Laws. Sir ROBERT PEEL went on the principle of retaining a duty on corn varying inversely with the price of corn in the home market; and Lord JOHN RUSSELL went no further than an attack upon the Sliding-Scale. The Anti-Corn Law party, under Mr. VILLIERS, were defeated by an overwhelming majority in the House of Commons, and Sir ROBERT PEEL's proposals were adopted. The Government Measures were, Mr. GLADSTONE maintained in the course of the debate, "a fair medium between the opposite extremes," and calculated to give "relief to consumers, steadiness to prices, an increase to foreign trade, and a general improvement of the condition of the country."

In his budget, PEEL adopted a bolder course. He refused either to persevere in the system of the preceding five years, which involved permanent additions to the National Debt, or to increase taxes on the necessities of life. He therefore imposed an income tax calculated to yield £4,380,000 annually, and accompanied the new tax by a reform of the tariff, which removed duties on the raw materials of manufacture and on some of the chief articles of food. To prove that this financial policy was successful, it is enough to mention that within three years the budget showed, instead of a deficiency, a surplus of £5,000,000, and that exports had risen in value from £47,000,000 to £60,000,000.

#### *The Protection of British Labour.*

The Parliament of 1841 rendered services of inestimable value to

the working classes by extending the social legislation which had been begun in 1833 by Lord ASHLEY's "Act for the Regulation of the Hours of Labour of Children and Young Persons in Mills and Factories." Lord ASHLEY, afterwards Lord SHAFTESBURY, one of PEEL's Tory supporters, had succeeded to the position formerly occupied by MR. SADLER, as leader of the movement for the protection of the factory operatives. In 1842 he determined to endeavour to extend legal protection to women and girls employed in mines and collieries. The investigations of a Commission that had inquired into the employment of children not only confirmed current accounts of the sufferings of the children in the mines, but proved that the condition of the women was equally pitiable. Children were employed at the earliest ages, at six or even at five years, and were compelled to draw loads by means of the girdle and chain. The Commissioners reported cases in which children of six years old, with burdens of at least half-a-hundredweight, went fourteen times a day a journey equal in distance to the height of St. Paul's Cathedral. The treatment to which women were subjected was altogether beyond description, but everyone could understand the physical and moral results of a system under which half-naked women were employed as mere beasts of burden for from eleven to sixteen hours in the day. Lord ASHLEY's Bill proposed the total prohibition of the employment of girls and women in mines and collieries. The Bill was accepted by the Government, and supported by the Whig leaders, but it had to encounter the opposition of some of the Radical members, notably MR. STANFELD and MR. AINSWORTH. Neither branch of the legislature, however, was willing to prefer the theories of Radical

politicians to arguments based upon facts, and the Bill rapidly became law.

### *Defeat of the Government Education Proposals.*

In 1843, the Government introduced a Bill to limit the employment of children in factories, and to secure their education with the assistance of National funds. Religious instruction was to be given in accordance with the doctrines of the Church of England, but provision was made for the conscientious scruples of Dissenters. Unfortunately, the jealousy of the sects was aroused, and large meetings were held at Manchester and elsewhere to strengthen the hands of the Radical members in opposing the Bill. In vain did Sir JAMES GRAHAM ask them to lay aside "all party feelings, all religious differences," and to find some neutral ground in which they might build "something approaching to a scheme of national education, with a due regard to the just wishes of the Established Church on the one hand, and studious attention to the honest scruples of the Dissenters on the other." The education clauses were abandoned in consequence of the bigoted and resolute opposition which they met in the Lower House, and the cause of national education was retarded for many years to come.

In the next year, 1844, the Government proposed another Bill dealing with the labour question. The Bill provided that no children under five should be employed in factories; that no children under thirteen should be employed more than six-and-a-half hours in one day, except under specified circumstances, and that women over eighteen should not be employed for more than twelve hours in one day, or sixty-nine hours in one week. Lord ASHLEY moved an amendment in favour of a

ten hours' limit, but was defeated by 188 to 181. There can be no doubt that most men believed that Lord ASHLEY was right, and he was enthusiastically supported by the working population; but a few years were to pass before he could finally overcome the champions of the capitalists and their friends, to whom Mr. BRIGHT, himself a mill-owner, lent the aid of his eloquence.

### *Peel and Repeal.*

In Ireland, Ministers had to deal with O'CONNELL's agitation for Repeal. O'CONNELL, though his speeches were usually disfigured by wild abuse of his opponents—he described the Duke of WELLINGTON as a "stunted corporal," and the *Times* newspaper as an "obscure rag,"—was one of the greatest orators of the time. He always professed a desire to keep within Constitutional limits. "No political reform," he said, "is worth the shedding of a drop of blood," and "the man who commits a crime gives strength to the enemy." But his practice was to collect huge meetings of Irishmen, with the avowed intention of impressing the Government with the danger of refusing his demands. At Mullingar he brought together a hundred thousand persons, and on the Hill of Tara more than twice that number. The prohibition of a meeting at Clontarf proved that the Government intended to be firm. An "Arms Bill" was carried, and legal proceedings were instituted against O'CONNELL. The conviction of the "uncrowned King" was upset by the House of Lords on technical grounds, but Ministers had achieved their purpose—they had proved that illegal agitation would be suppressed.\* They had defeated

\* In defending the Union with Ireland, Sir ROBERT PEEL received the patriotic support of his political opponents. Lord JOHN RUSSELL's letter to the Duke of

the Repealers, and henceforth O'CONNELL "ceased to be dangerous."

### *Remedial Measures.*

The Irish policy of Sir ROBERT also embraced important remedial measures. He carried the Charitable Bequests Act. In spite of what MACAULAY called "the bray of Exeter Hall," he increased the endowment of Maynooth, and he established the Queen's Colleges. He laid the foundation of agrarian legislation by the appointment of the Devon Commission. Lord BEACONSFIELD believed that these Measures formed only a small part of the legislative schemes which PEEL hoped to carry out for the benefit of Ireland.

### *Foreign Policy.*

The foreign policy of the Government showed a vigilant care for British interests. The Afghan war, though chequered with disasters, was ended with honour. The invasion of the Sikhs was resolutely repelled. Disputes with France and the United States were happily adjusted. The respect with which the Government inspired the minds of the continental Statesmen is shown by M. GUIZOT'S remark that the real as well as the

LEINSTER, of September, 1844, which has lately appeared in the *Edinburgh Review*, shows the decision with which the Liberal party of that time rejected all thought of party gain at the expense of the Union. "As you are the head of the Whigs in Ireland," wrote Lord JOHN RUSSELL, "I wish you would write to Lord Charlemont and others to beware of countenancing any approach to what is called Federal Union. The Union is a fundamental part of our political system. It cannot be compromised or cut into fragments to make Repeal more easy to swallow. No man abhors more than I do the breach of faith that has been committed in defrauding Ireland of the participation of equal rights. But, while I am ready to sacrifice any chance of power or popularity to obtain for Ireland that fair participation, I am determined that, so far as I am concerned, I will stand by the Legislative Union."

ostensible objects of PEEL'S policy were "peace and justice among nations."

### *Rise of the "Young England" Party.*

In truth, the success of the Tory Ministers in every direction, during their first four years of government, exceeded the expectations or the hopes which they could entertain when they took office in 1841. Nevertheless, PEEL occupied an untenable position. While the country gentlemen formed the backbone of his party, he was disposed to give the first place in his thoughts to the demands of the commercial classes. While he wished to unite "the landed, commercial, and manufacturing interests," it became more and more certain, as time went on, that Land and Commerce were at that day hostile forces. PEEL'S Tory followers knew that the motives of the Anti-Corn Law leaguers were not single; that in the name of the people they were striving to exalt the manufacturers at the expense of the landlords; that they looked forward to the day when "Squire Cotton" should supersede "Squire Corn." To the discontent of the rising Tories, which may be dated from the establishment of the Ecclesiastical Commission in 1835, the "Young England" party owed its birth. It was an attempt to maintain the "territorial constitution of England" as "the only basis and security for local government," and to substitute for middle-class government under the Whig oligarchy, or "a great Parliamentary middleman like Peel," a political system under which the Tory Peers and gentlemen should lead the people and undertake great social duties. Of the views of the new party—the party in which D'ISRAELI was associated with Lord GEORGE BENTINCK, and GEORGE SMYTHE, and Lord JOHN MANNERS, and HENRY HOPE—we have a full

account in DISRAELI's trilogy of political novels, in "Coningsby," "Sybil," and "Tancred."

"*Young England's*" Creed.

They regarded the Tamworth manifesto of 1834 as "an attempt to construct a party without principle," of which the inevitable consequence was "Political Infidelity." The party as led by PEEL appeared to them to be destitute of "knowledge, genius, thought, truth, or faith." "In the selfish strife of factions," we are told in "Sybil," "two great existences have been blotted out of the history of England, the Monarch and the Multitude; as the power of the Crown has diminished, the privileges of the people have disappeared, till at length the sceptre has become a pageant and its subject has degenerated into a serf."

In the preface to "Lothair," the author sums up the objects of himself and his friends. "To change back the oligarchy into a generous aristocracy round a real throne; to infuse life and vigour into the Church as the trainer of the nation, by the revival of its Convocation, then dumb, on a wide basis, and not, as has since been done, in the shape of a priestly section; to establish a Commercial Code on the principles successfully negotiated by Lord Bolingbroke at Utrecht, and which, though baffled at the time by a Whig Parliament, were subsequently and triumphantly vindicated by his political pupil and heir, Mr. Pitt; to govern Ireland according to the policy of Charles I., and not of Oliver Cromwell; to emancipate the political constituency of 1832 from its sectarian bondage and contracted sympathies; to elevate the physical as well as the moral condition of the people, by establishing that labour required regulation as much as property; and all this rather by the use of ancient forms and the resto-

ration of the past, than by political revolutions founded on abstract ideas, appeared to be the course which the circumstances of this country required, and which, practically speaking, could only, with all their faults and backslidings, be undertaken by a reconstructed Tory party." The "Young England" men "recognised imagination in the government of the nations as a quality not less important than reason. They trusted much to a popular sentiment, which rested on an heroic tradition, and was sustained by the high spirit of a free aristocracy. Their economic doctrines were not unsound, but they looked upon the health and knowledge of the multitude as not the least precious part of the wealth of nations. In asserting the doctrine of race they were entirely opposed to the equality of man, and similar abstract dogmas, which have destroyed ancient society without creating a satisfactory substitute. Resting on popular sympathies and popular privileges, they held that no society could be durable unless it was built upon the principles of loyalty and religious reverence."

*Sir James Graham's Opinion.*

PEEL's friends regarded "Young England" with dislike. Sir JAMES GRAHAM wrote to MR. CROKER, in 1843, "With regard to 'Young England,' the puppets are moved by Disraeli, who is the ablest man among them. I consider him unprincipled and disappointed; and in despair he has tried the effect of bullying. I think, with you, that they will return to the *crib* after prancing, capering, and snorting; but a crack or two of the whip well applied may hasten and ensure their return. Disraeli alone is mischievous; and with him I have no desire to keep terms. It would be better for the party if he were driven into the ranks of our open enemies."

*The Revival of Toryism.*

What PEEL's friends treated as rebellion was really fidelity to the principles which PEEL, as he himself admits, was already deserting. "I had adopted at an early period of my public life, without, I fear, much serious reflection, the opinions generally prevalent at this time among men of all parties as to the justice and necessity of protection to British agriculture . . . Between the passing of the Corn Bill in 1842 and the close of the Session in 1845, the opinions I had previously entertained had undergone a great change." The "Young England" men, on the other hand, were resolved to support the agricultural classes—"I take the only broad and safe line," said DISRAELI in 1843, "viz., that what we ought to uphold is the preponderance of the landed interest; that the preponderance of the landed interest has made England; that it is an immense element

of political power and stability; that we should never have been able to undertake the great war on which we embarked in the memory of many present, that we should never have been able to conquer the greatest military genius which the world ever saw, with the greatest means at his disposal, and to hurl him from the throne, if we had not had a territorial aristocracy to give stability to our Constitution."

Lord SHAFESBURY's expressions in his Diary at this period show that in his judgment there was good ground for dreading the supremacy of a selfish plutocracy. "All Peel's affinities," wrote the great philanthropist, in 1843, "are towards wealth and capital. What has he ever done or proposed for the working-classes? Cotton is everything, man is nothing." PEEL's policy of compromise could not last long, and in 1845 the hour was at hand in which he must choose whom he would serve.

1846.

## THE REPEAL OF THE CORN LAWS.

*Peel's Position.*

**T**O all outward appearances the Conservative party was never so strong as in the summer of 1845. Their majority was triumphant and overwhelming; the Whigs were so feeble that they scarcely deserved to be called an Opposition, and the Ministers were, in oratorical power and administrative ability, without competitors in the country. To an outside observer it might seem that Sir ROBERT PEEL, like WALPOLE,

would remain in office for twenty years, yet the writing was already on the wall, and the shadow of a crushing defeat hung over the great Statesman. The disintegrating forces, though unseen, were both numerous and strong. The two leaders of the Conservative party, Sir ROBERT PEEL and Lord STANLEY, could not act harmoniously together. Lord STANLEY, with his bold and outspoken manner, offended the shy and constrained COMMONER by his unseasonable jokes and want of caution, and

PEEL had already resolved to get rid of him. Moreover, although the party seemed united, there was a dangerous feeling of sullen discontent in the rank and file, for PEEL possessed the votes rather than the hearts of his followers. This feeling had found expression in the cutting diatribes of DISRAELI, whom PEEL considered an obnoxious and eccentric free lance.

"A Conservative Government," said DISRAELI, "is an organised hypocrisy." "The Right Hon. Baronet has caught the Whigs out bathing, and has walked off with their clothes. He has left them in full enjoyment of their Liberal position, and he is himself a strict Conservative of their garments." "He always rests great measures on small precedents, he always traces the steam engine back to the tea-kettle." These sentiments were received with sincere, though subdued, applause from the benches below the gangway, and the Tories were not at all in the temper to follow their leader if it involved the abandonment of any fundamental principle. Yet this is exactly the course that leader contemplated. In 1845 PEEL was already a Free Trader, the convert of the Anti-Corn Law League.

#### *The Anti-Corn Law League.*

The Anti-Corn Law League was founded on December 20th, 1838, at a meeting held in King Street, Manchester. Funds came in liberally at first, and were expended in sending lecturers about the country and in getting up petitions. By February, 1840, 2,141 petitions with 980,352 signatures had been presented against the Corn Laws, as compared with 2,886 petitions with 138,051 signatures in favour of them. CHARLES VILLIERS by his Parliamentary pertinacity and COBDEN and BRIGHT by their platform speeches brought the question forcibly before public notice with the

result that, as we have seen, Lord JOHN RUSSELL thought it a popular move to go to the country on the cry of Free Trade in 1841. But the Free Traders at that time suffered from the general disfavour incurred by the Whigs, and lost their two aristocratic leaders, Lords HOWICK and MORPETH, at the General Election. From that date the agitation began to dwindle, and the League was seriously damaged by the conduct of some Free Trade delegates, who forced their way into the lobby of the House of Commons and had to be expelled by the police.

In November, 1842, the League fund was £50,000, but for the same month in 1843 only £12,000 was collected.

The prospects of Free Trade never looked so dark as in July, 1845, when plentiful harvests and cheap corn had driven the Corn Tax out of men's minds. But in August down came the rain and, in the expressive words of COBDEN's biographer, "rained away the Corn Laws." The harvest was ruined, and a fatal blight settled on the potato, which failed in every county in Ireland, so that famine stared the Irish in the face.

#### *Not a Democratic Movement.*

The nature of the Anti-Corn Law League has been much misrepresented. It was essentially a Middle-Class and not a democratic movement, and the object of the League was rather to exalt the manufacturing capitalist than to relieve the working-man. A proof of this lies in the fact that they were violently opposed by the Chartists, who, with all their faults and violence, certainly represented a large section of the working-classes. So unpopular were the Leaguers with the lower classes, that they were obliged to hold their meetings by ticket. The only two important open meetings of which

we have been able to find any notice, were both broken up by the Chartists.

At this date the manufacturers felt that they were in no danger from continental competition, while the Corn Tax, by raising the price of food, raised wages and was practically a tax upon themselves.

Regarding agriculture as being conducted at their expense, they anticipated, with satisfaction, the migration of labourers from the country to the manufacturing towns, thus making labour plentiful and cheap. The Free Traders had, in short, over-looked the fact, now only too well-known, that the prosperity of the manufacturer largely depends on the purchasing power of the agricultural classes, and that it is impossible to harass the landed interest without injuring trade.

#### *Logical Results of Free Trade.*

Free Trade has logically two necessary corollaries. In the first place, labour must be free. The working-man must be left exposed to the effects of competition. Factory Acts, by artificially altering the duration and incidence of labour, and Trades' Unions, by artificially raising wages, render the country which adopts them liable to be under-sold by less scrupulous neighbours. This fact was frankly admitted by Mr. BRIGHT, who opposed vigorously both the Acts and the trade organisations.

Secondly, both imports and exports must be free. At present we have free imports only. PEEL and COBDEN, and the Leaguers generally, prophesied that Free Trade would be enthusiastically welcomed by all the nations in Europe if England set the example. We have now been setting that example for forty years absolutely without results, so that the original Free Traders stand convicted not

only of false prophecy, but also of a false ideal. They believed that the one object of a nation was the accumulation of wealth. Free Trade, undoubtedly, does accumulate wealth, for in proportion as commodities can be readily exchanged between different countries, capitalists can increase the scope and profits of their undertakings. But the nation has discovered that the true prosperity of a country lies in the distribution of wealth and in the conditions of labour.

Free Trade, by admitting foreign competition, tends to depress wages and to injure the working-man; it substitutes international exchange for national labour, cosmopolitan sentiment for patriotic enthusiasm. We must balance one tendency against another. We must look upon Free Trade not as a creed or a gospel, but merely as a fiscal arrangement, which may be modified in accordance with particular circumstances.

#### *Peel's Reasons for abolishing the Corn Laws.*

In 1846, the Corn Laws had ceased to secure the main purpose of their existence. The trade and population of England were undergoing great expansion, and thus it was necessary to encourage the importation of food. PEEL'S motives were various. His sympathies were with the millowner rather than with the landlord. His sensitive mind could not endure the responsibility of possibly increasing crime and penury by keeping the price of food artificially high, and, being essentially a watcher of the seasons, he was much impressed by the power and ability of the League. That his conversion was perfectly honest there can be no doubt, but his methods do not deserve the same praise. He had probably adopted Free Trade in his own mind for some time. CROKER,

who had been his intimate friend, writes to the Duke of WELLINGTON in December, 1846, "Recollect that I told you, long before there was any suspicion of a potato famine, that he was veering to Free Trade. I have suspected it these two years." The potato famine gave him a fresh impulse, and determined him to put his theory into practice. The difficulties in his way were great, for he was pledged to every single man of his party. Before repealing the Corn Laws, he must break all his pledges and betray his followers. But he had already changed front on the Emancipation question and re-constructed his party afterwards, and his belief in his unrivalled powers as a Parliamentary tactician probably convinced him that what he had done before he might do again.

#### *Cabinet Opposition.*

On September 13th, PEEL opened his mind to his faithful follower, Sir JAMES GRAHAM. "The accounts of the potato crop in Ireland are becoming very alarming. I have no confidence in such remedies as the prohibition of exports. The removal of impediments to imports will alone be effectual."

On November 1st, he called a Cabinet Council to consider the following memorandum:—"Shall we maintain unaltered?—Shall we modify?—Shall we suspend the operation of the Corn Laws?—Can we vote public money to sustain any considerable portion of the people and maintain in full operation the existing restrictions on the free importation of grain? I am bound to say my impression is we cannot." Lord STANLEY led the opposition to this suggestion, remarking that he could not support the repeal of the Corn Laws, and that Repeal, if persisted in, must break up the Government even if the Cabinet agreed, because it was the business of the Whigs and not

of the Conservatives. After some discussion, PEEL on the 6th moved "to issue forthwith an order in Council remitting the duty on grain in bond to 1s., and opening the ports until a day named," but, as he was only supported by Lord ABERDEEN, Sir JAMES GRAHAM, and Mr. SIDNEY HERBERT, the proposal fell to the ground.

#### *Russell's Edinburgh Letter.*

The next move came from Lord JOHN RUSSELL, who had received private information as to PEEL's state of mind. He determined to strike in on his own behalf, in order that he might force the hand of the Ministry, and, if possible, obtain for himself the settlement of the question. On November 22nd, he published the celebrated Edinburgh letter—"The duties are so contrived that the worse the qualities of the corn the higher the duty. Thus, the corn barometer points to fair whilst the ship is bending under the storm. . . . Let us unite to put an end to a system which has proved the blight of commerce, the bane of agriculture, the source of bitter division among classes, the cause of penury, fever, mortality, and crime among the people. . . . It is not to be denied that many elections in 1841 and some in 1845 appear to favour the assertion that Free Trade is not popular with the mass of the community. The Government appear to be waiting for some excuse to give up the Corn Laws. Let the people by petition, by address, by remonstrance, afford them the excuse they seek."

Never did a manifesto have so sudden and tremendous an effect. A Cabinet Council was called, at which PEEL proposed to "suspend the Corn Laws with a view to their not being re-enacted." Lord JOHN RUSSELL's arguments had convinced in three days men who had been undisturbed by seven years of

Corn Law agitation. Lord STANLEY, instead of being in a majority of eight, found himself in a minority of two, the Duke of BUCCLEUGH being his only supporter in the Cabinet. Seven Ministers had changed their opinions with a readiness and speed that were perhaps unprecedented. The Duke of WELLINGTON drew up a statement of his views. "I think the continuance of the Corn Laws," he said, "essential to agriculture in its present state, and a benefit to the community. . . . But a good Government for the country is more important than Corn Laws." On this principle he acted throughout the controversy. He regarded himself as the servant of the Crown, and he was prepared to support Sir ROBERT PEEL at any sacrifice of opinion sooner than allow COBDEN to form a Ministry.

It was urged, however, not without force, that if the country was to be governed on Free Trade principles it should be governed by Free Traders not by ex-Protectionists. PEEL was prepared to propose the repeal at once without resigning, and his memory was apparently deficient when he subsequently observed, "It is asserted that I wished to interfere in the settlement of the question by the noble lord opposite, that is the foulest calumny which the vindictive imagination of a political opponent ever dictated."

#### *Free Traders in Power.*

But Lord STANLEY and the Duke of BUCCLEUGH finally determined not to support him, and he resigned his office on December 5th. The QUEEN sent for Lord JOHN RUSSELL, who failed to form a Government. His ostensible reason was that Lord GREY declined to serve with Lord PALMERSTON, but his probable motive was a desire not to spare PEEL the necessity of breaking up his party.

PEEL resumed office, remarking in a letter of this date "I feel like a man restored to life after his funeral sermon has been preached." These proceedings put fresh life into the declining League. A meeting was held at Manchester, and £60,000 was raised amidst great enthusiasm. So disordered were the Protectionists that the Government was considered safe. "There will be a fat cattle opposition," wrote a foreign critic.

On January 22nd, 1846, Parliament was opened by the QUEEN, who said in the speech from the throne, "I have had great satisfaction in giving my assent to the Measures to stimulate domestic skill and industry by the repeal of prohibitive and the relaxation of protective duties. I recommend you to take into your early consideration whether the principle may not be yet more extensively applied."

Amidst breathless excitement PEEL rose to make his explanation. He admitted that his opinions on Protection were changed, but he felt no humiliation because his motives were pure, and because there were sufficient facts to account for the change. Then, as he felt his power over the House, his pride broke out. Turning towards his discontented followers, he told them in half-menacing tones "It is no easy matter to ensure the united action of an ancient monarchy, a proud aristocracy, and a reformed House of Commons." "I do not shrink from office but I will not retain it with mutilated power and shackled authority. I will not stand at the helm on a tempestuous night if that helm is not allowed freely to traverse. I will not undertake to direct the vessel by observations taken in the year 1842." "I do not desire to be the Minister of England; but while I am I will hold office shackled by no servile tenure."

*Disraeli's Opportunity.*

The speech was well received. The Protectionists, deserted by their leaders and without hope, sat in silent despair, and the great tactician seemed about to triumph over Parliamentary consistency when, late in the evening, DISRAELI, the "Young England" leader, got up. He said, "Protectionist opinions sent me to this House, and if I had relinquished them I should have relinquished my seat also." He compared PEEL to the Turkish Admiral who, being appointed to the command, "steered at once into the enemy's port," and vindicated himself when attacked by saying "I have an objection to war. I see no use in prolonging the struggle. I only accepted the command that I might terminate the contest by betraying my master." He also called him "a watcher of the atmosphere." "A great orator before a green table beating a red box, with no idea but that of Parliamentary success," "governing not by argument but by the state of the registration and the accident of the polls." "His Cabinet had resigned office because it could not support a Measure and accepted it for the same reason."

The speech was received with wild cheers by the country party, in whose ranks angry cries took the place of sullen silence. The opposition was going to be dangerous.

*The Government Proposals.*

The Government Measures were expounded in detail on January 27. They involved (1) A total repeal of the Corn Laws at the end of three years, leaving only a nominal duty; (2) During those three years a maximum duty of 10s., and a minimum duty of 4s. The maximum duty was to come into effect when the price of corn sank below 4s. per quarter, and was to be decreased by a shilling for every shilling's rise in price until 5s. was

reached, when the minimum duty of 4s. operated. All foreign cattle were to be admitted duty free. To conceal in some measure the sweeping nature of these proposals, PEEL combined with them the abolition of some unimportant duties on manufactures. Some compensation had been promised to the landed interest, so he proposed a remission of taxes to the amount of about £250,000 per annum, and a system of loans on conditions too hard for the system to be practical. Some other trifling measures of compensation there were, which never came into effect.

*Lord George Bentinck.*

The Protectionists, who formed over two-thirds of the Conservative party, began to organise for serious fight under the auspices of the Protection Society, presided over by the Duke of RICHMOND. Having finally formed themselves into a distinct party, they offered the leadership in the House of Commons to Lord GEORGE BENTINCK, the member for King's Lynn. Lord GEORGE may be entitled the MARCELLUS of English politics, for the whole sphere of his political eminence is contained in the short space of two years. He had spoken for the first time in the House on January 27th, 1846, and he died on September 21st, 1848. He had, however, sat in eight Parliaments, had been CANNING's secretary, and was not without considerable knowledge of politics. He rose in an instant from the position of a private individual to that of the trusted guide of a large party through a bitter and dangerous struggle. He declined the name of leader, although his energy and commanding personality gave him the practical leadership. His close ally and admirer was DISRAELI, and these two men really fought the battle of Protection. It should be remembered that they did not limit their

opposition to the Corn Laws as did some of the party, but, as the Duke of RUTLAND remarked in a letter to the *Times*, March 29th, 1883, "They opposed Free Trade for the sake of trade and manufacture as well as agriculture. Lord George often said that the manufacturers would be the first to want Protection back again." The history of the Fair Trade movement shows the accuracy of this forecast.

Whilst PEEL's old supporters were hostile, the Whigs were anything but friendly. Lord JOHN RUSSELL and COBDEN, who calculated that PEEL, when out of office, could only command 20 votes, were inclined to turn out the Government by proposing total abolition, but the plan broke down owing to a want of popular support. CHARLES GREVILLE, himself a Whig, observes, "In this affair John Russell does not shine. He is very clever and ingenious, but a little man, full of personal feelings and antipathies, something, too, of envy."

#### *An Irish Complication.*

Whilst thus burdened with the Repeal question, PEEL began to be troubled about Ireland as well. During 1845, there had been 5,607 outrages and 136 murders in that unhappy country. Accordingly, on February 24th, he was compelled to introduce a Coercion Bill containing a curfew clause. DISRAELI, foreseeing that opposition to Coercion might prove a useful ground of union between Protectionists, Whigs, and "O'CONNELL'S tail," was in favour of opposing the Bill, but BENTINCK preferred supporting it if he found that the Ministry were in earnest about it, and the birth of the Bill was calm and peaceful.

#### *Move and Counter-move.*

The first reading of the Repeal Bill was carried on February 27th by 337 to 240 votes. Lord GEORGE

BENTINCK rose at midnight to make his first important speech. He was unpractised in debating, his voice was weak, and his gestures excessive, but his command of details and able exposition got him a hearing. BENTINCK's invective was terrible, direct and crushing; he struck with a club where DISRAELI stabbed with a rapier. BENTINCK showed that, so far from there being increased scarcity, the stocks of wheat in bond had doubled since 1845; that whereas the population of England had increased only 32 per cent. since 1821, the amount of wheat grown had increased 64 per cent. Hence he argued that the capacity of the land had increased twice as fast as the population. On March 26th he spoke again, ending with these words, "I cannot say you (the Ministers) have stood by your craft as long as she kept afloat. . . No, you have brought her on a lee shore and left her among the breakers. You have placed her under the guns of the enemy while your faithful crew were asleep in their hammocks. You have scuttled the ship, stolen the compass, sneaked away in the long boat, and deserted to the enemy."

At the end of the evening PALMERSTON created some surprise and much disgusted COBDEN by declaring for a permanent fixed duty. The idea of a coalition between Whigs and Protectionists was forming in his ingenious mind. However, the Bill passed its second reading by a majority of 88.

Then occurred a most remarkable series of manoeuvres. The O'Connellites, with many Whigs and a few Protectionists, opposed the Coercion Bill, whilst BENTINCK and DISRAELI blocked the Corn Bill. The result was a deadlock. BENTINCK, however, continued to support the Coercion Bill, and on April 4th he defined his position in a very statesmanlike speech. He

had always felt much sympathy towards Ireland, as is shown by this passage from one of his letters to CROKER—"The famine had come on so suddenly. . . . The Irish people were like the Israelites in the wilderness, only the God of Israel was not a 'Whig or a Free Trader.' " Free Trade in corn he was sure would only do harm to an agricultural country like Ireland. There were 500,000 small farmers whose crop largely consisted of oats, these must be ruined if the Corn Laws were abolished. In this speech he proved that £10,000,000 worth of corn was being exported from Ireland beyond what would suffice to feed the people. Wheat in Cork was at 49s. 6d., whilst foreign corn in bond was at 54s., so that a suspension of the Corn Tax could not attract corn to Ireland, where it was cheap, from other places, where it was dear. The cause of distress was a want not of food but of money, not the duties but an insufficient poor rate of £166,000, and the only remedies were immediate relief and an order against the exportation of corn. Curiously enough, these conclusions are practically endorsed by Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR in his "*Parnellite Movement*," published in 1885.

#### *Attacks on the Prime Minister.*

As regards the Coercion Bill, BENTINCK would support it if—an important proviso—Ministers showed they were in earnest by being prompt. The deadlock lasted until May 2nd, when the Coercion Bill passed its second reading, and liberated the Corn Bill, which, on May 15th, passed its third reading by a majority of 98 in a House of 556. DISRAELI concluded a bitter but brilliant speech with the following scathing criticism—"The right hon. baronet had been a trader on other people's intelligence. His life was, in fact, one great principle

of appropriation—he was the political burglar of other men's ideas—deserting his friends and acting as if they had deserted him. The occupants of the Treasury bench were political pedlars who had bought their party in the dearest market and sold it in the cheapest. . . . The first day after the exposition in the House a gentleman learned in political secrets met me and said, 'What do you think of your Chief's plan?' I did not exactly know what to say about it, but supposed, to use the phrase of the hour, it was a great and comprehensive scheme. 'Oh,' he replied, 'it's not his plan at all. It's 'Popkin's plan.' And, sir, is England to be governed and convulsed on 'Popkin's plan?' Will he appeal to England on a fantastic scheme of some pedant?"

PEEL was so disturbed by this attack that the SPEAKER expected him to burst into tears. He said in reply—"I foresaw, as the inevitable result of my course, that I must interrupt political relations in which I took a sincere pride; but the smallest penalty I contemplated was the continued venomous attacks of the Member for Shrewsbury. . . . If he, after reviewing my political life of 30 years, entertained (in 1841) that opinion of me which he now professes, it is surprising that he should have been ready to unite his fortunes with mine in office, thus implying the strongest proof a man can give of confidence in the honour and integrity of a Minister of the Crown."

These two extracts forcibly present the spirit in which this political quarrel was maintained on both sides. That PEEL felt most acutely the breach with his old adherents is certain, and this doubtless unduly embittered him against both DISRAELI and BENTINCK, for the same charge of office-seeking was afterwards preferred against Lord

**GEORGE.** But while PEEL'S speeches bear evidence of strong personal feeling against his opponents, the same cannot be said of DISRAELI'S. His were but the brilliant and severe criticisms of the advocate. He spoke simply as the leader of a party, whose business it was to present his opponent's case in the worst light. That he bore no malice against PEEL is proved not only by his private letters of this date, but also by the regret he afterwards expressed for many things he would rather have left unsaid, and it is fair to conclude that he took no pleasure in wounding PEEL so deeply. PEEL, in fact, claimed for himself what he refused to others. He expected even his opponents to recognise the honesty of his motives, however inconsistent his actions might be. His capacity to persuade himself of the rectitude of his own course—though not equal to the later developments of his pupil, Mr. GLADSTONE—blinded him to the fact that anyone could with justice question the sincerity of motives which approved themselves to his own conscience.

#### *Combinations and Conspiracies.*

An important debate took place in the Lords on the second reading, Lord STANLEY making a very fine speech, described by BROUHAM as "the finest possible." The Whig Lords, too, especially Lord MELBOURNE, showed some distaste for the Measure. Lord PALMERSTON was desirous of profiting by this feeling. He knew that a coalition between Peelites and Whigs would result in a wretchedly weak Ministry, whereas, if the Whigs combined with the Protectionists, they would form a solid majority in the House of Commons, and Lord GEORGE, who had Whig sympathies, might easily join a Whig Cabinet. Such a union was possible on the basis he had indicated

on March 26th—a low fixed duty, better terms than the Protectionists would get out of PEEL. The only difficulty was "the Edinburgh Manifesto." These negotiations reached Lord JOHN RUSSELL's ears, and he acted with promptitude. The second reading passed on May 28th, and he called a meeting of 60 Whig peers the same afternoon at Lansdowne House. Lord MELBOURNE grumbled, for he had disliked the Bill throughout, and had even called PEEL'S conduct "damned dishonest" when dining with the QUEEN. But at last he gave way with the remark, "If you are going to eat all the dirt PEEL chooses to make I don't mind taking my mouthful." In this manner PALMERSTON'S scheme was frustrated.

On this same day another important consultation took place between DISRAELI and BENTINCK in the library of the House of Commons. The Ministers only controlled 116 members, about one-sixth of the House, yet only on the Coercion Bill could Whigs and Protectionists unite against them. BENTINCK determined to oppose the third reading. His objection was that he had voted, as had most of his followers except DISRAELI, both for the first and second reading. It was true that his support had been conditional on the Ministers showing promptitude. There had been a delay of six weeks, and of that delay he might take advantage. It must be admitted that the excuse is rather transparent, it just hides the nakedness of inconsistency and no more. But the Protectionists were resolved to turn out the Ministry because they honestly had no confidence in them. In the "game of polities" a man must play according to his hand; he is sometimes in a position when his play must be guided by the evident weakness of his opponent's cards.

*The Canning Incident—Retribution or Mistake.*

The Coercion Bill came up for second reading on June 8th. Lord GEORGE BENTINCK premised by saying that he opposed the Bill on the grounds above mentioned, but this part of his speech was obviously a mere means of getting a fair field. Then he turned and aimed his blows directly at Sir ROBERT PEEL. "The right hon. baronet says that he will not be a minister on sufferance. Why, sir, he must be deaf to all around him if he does not find out very soon that he is in that position. Is he not supported sometimes by gentlemen opposite, sometimes by gentlemen around him. His main supporters are his paid Janissaries, who, while they support him, express disgust at his conduct. When we remember his conduct in 1825, 1827, and 1829, though by long sitting on the stool of repentance we might forgive him, the country will not twice pardon such crimes in the same man. It is time that atonement should be made to an insulted country and an insulted parliament, and to the betrayed constituency of the Empire." He then referred to PEEL's conduct towards CANNING. "I have lived long enough to remember with deep and heart-felt sorrow the time when he hunted an illustrious relative of mine to death, and when he stated that he could not support the Ministry because a leading member of it was likely to bring forward the question of Catholic Emancipation. That was the conduct of the right hon. baronet in 1827. But in 1829 he tells the House that he had changed his opinions on that subject in 1825, and had communicated the change to Lord Liverpool. . . . If, therefore, the right hon. baronet says it is base and dishonest, and inconsistent with his duty to continue to maintain opinions after he has changed them, does he not stand

convicted, on his own verdict, of base and dishonest conduct, conduct inconsistent with his duty to his Sovereign?"

The attack was vigorous and well-timed. PEEL'S Government was being killed by general mistrust, and anything calculated to increase that mistrust thrust the tottering Government from its last foothold. Lord GEORGE BENTINCK had relied for his statements, not on any printed reports, but on his own memory, for he was in the House in 1829, and on the general belief, as to the prevalence of which CHARLES GREVILLE speaks, that PEEL had made such a speech in 1829. PEEL answered him on June 12th. The PRIME MINISTER was in excellent spirits. He began with a joke about the housemaid referred to by a member who was afraid to go to Ireland. "*Ne sit ancillæ amor tibi pudori.*" He denied that he had changed his opinions on Catholic Emancipation in 1825, or that he had communicated the change to Lord LIVERPOOL. He said that he had never admitted any change in 1829, and solemnly declared that he was in fact opposed to Catholic Emancipation up to 1829. He concluded with an argument like that which he had already used concerning DISRAELI. "Since 1835, I have been honoured with his pure and disinterested support. He called me his right hon. friend; he permitted me to be the leader of the party to which he belonged. Never, until Monday last, did I harbour the suspicion that the noble lord believed me to be a man who had hunted his relation to death."

The speech was very effective in the House, but DISRAELI found on enquiry that there was considerable documentary evidence to support BENTINCK's charge, and brought the subject forward once more on the 15th. He showed that in the report called the *Mirror of*

*Parliament* there occurred in a speech of PEEL's, delivered on March 8th, 1829, the following sentence—"I stated to the Earl of Liverpool (in 1825) that in consequence of the decision against me by the voices of the representatives of Ireland something respecting the Catholics ought, in my opinion, to be done." The Parliamentary report of the *Times*, printed on March 6th, agreed with the *Mirror of Parliament*. *Hansard*, it was true, did not contain the confession, the same sentence in that report ending, "It was my anxious wish to be relieved from office." But a note to the speech in *Hansard* ran "By permission of Mr. Secretary Peel." It was a corrected, not to say garbled, report.

One of PEEL's opponents in 1829 was Sir E. KNATCHBULL, who, when replying to PEEL in the same debate, observed, "If at that period (1825-27) the policy of conceding the Catholic question was clear to the right hon. gentleman, I say that in justice to himself, in justice to his friends, in justice to his country, in justice to Mr. Canning, he ought not to have concealed it. If, as he says now, he had discovered in 1825 the necessity of passing this Measure, I ask why he did not say so in 1827, and give his support to Mr. Canning then." This passage also was omitted from *Hansard*, though reported in the *Times* and the *Mirror of Parliament*. PEEL had never complained of misrepresentation, had never corrected the report in the *Times*, or in the *Mirror of Parliament*. Sir E. KNATCHBULL was so prominent a man, and his speech so famous, that PEEL could hardly plead ignorance of his accusation.

Lastly, DISRAELI quoted the following passage from the *Edinburgh Review* as proof, not of the fact, but of the prevailing impression—"At the same time (as his retirement from Canning's Government) he

had in his writing desk a letter in which, two years before, he told Lord Liverpool that the Catholic claims ought to be granted." DISRAELI concluded with a comparison between CANNING and PEEL. "The vulture," he exclaimed, "rules where once the eagle reigned." "Nemesis inspires this debate and dictates this division and seals with the stigma of Parliamentary reprobation the catastrophe of a sinister career." Probably no speech ever delivered had such an enormous effect. The House considered for the time that the case was made out, and that PEEL had been guilty not only of the basest treachery to CANNING but of deliberate falsehood. The MINISTER, his Parliamentary manner for once broken through, rose, pale, agitated, and suffering. The House in which he had once been supreme would barely listen. He uttered some broken disconnected sentences, which seem, as reported in *Hansard*, absolutely unlike his usual fluent style, begged them to suspend their judgment and then retired, discomfited and depressed.

On June 19th, PEEL delivered his defence, having spent the intervening time in searching through old documents. He declared that he only possessed four letters from Lord LIVERPOOL, which he proceeded to read, showing that they were inconsistent with the theory that he had confessed any change of opinions to that Statesman. He then proceeded to deal with the incriminating passage. It was not contained in any other report, newspaper, or otherwise, except the *Times* and the *Mirror of Parliament*. He stated, on the authority of reporters, whom he had consulted, that the *Mirror* was not an independent report, but a compilation from the newspaper reports edited by a Mr. Burrows, since dead, who was not a reporter, and could not write shorthand. There had been,

he urged, some mistake on the part of the *Times*' reporter, which had been copied into the *Mirror*. As to Sir E. KNATCHBULL, probably he had not been present, and had based his speech on the *Times*' report.

PEEL was considered to have cleared himself, and Lord JOHN RUSSELL expressed himself satisfied with the explanation, adding, "But at the same time I cannot express surprise or wonder at any wrath or vindictive feeling being directed against him, because in his career he has done that which perhaps has never happened to so eminent a man before. He has twice changed his opinion on the greatest political questions of the day."

At the same time the discussion did the Ministry enormous harm, as it enabled men distinctly to realise PEEL's double change of opinion. Some remarks seem called for as to the real facts in the controversy. PEEL, in the first place, was in error about Mr. BURROWS and the *Mirror*. He was a reporter, and he could write shorthand. The *Mirror* was not a compilation, and Mr. BURROWS was not dead in June, 1846, but absent in India. Moreover, Sir E. KNATCHBULL was present on March 8th, 1829, and his name is down in the division list. What is still more remarkable is that he was alive in 1846, and that PEEL was personally acquainted and yet did not get a letter from him. At the same time DISRAELI himself came to the conclusion that PEEL did not alter his opinions about Catholic Emancipation before 1829, and consequently did not communicate, or say that he had communicated, such a change to Lord LIVERPOOL. Yet the circumstantial evidence is very strong in favour of that damaging sentence. Possibly PEEL made some slip of the tongue which only the *Mirror* and the *Times*

reported. PEEL's whole career is dead against the accusation, which was, however, brought forward in perfect good faith.

### "Nemesis."

On June 25th, the Corn Law Bill came down from the House of Lords. PEEL had triumphed, the Protectionists were beaten, the Bill had become law, but, in his hour of victory, he was in their power. The Whigs were solid against Coercion. Even COBDEN deserted PEEL. He expressed confidence, indeed, in him, eulogising him, passing panegyrics and encomiums upon him, thanking him "for the unwearied perseverance, unswerving firmness and great ability with which he had conducted through the House of Commons one of the most munificent reforms ever carried through any country."

But what advantage is there in eulogiums, or in confidence, to a man who wants votes? "About half-past one," says DISRAELI, "the galleries were cleared, the division was called, and the question put. . . . One hundred Protectionist members followed the Minister; more than 80 avoided the division; about the same followed Lord George Bentinck. . . . It was impossible he (Peel) could have marked them without emotion—the flower of that great party which had been so proud to follow one who had been so proud to lead them. . . . They had stood by him in the darkest hour, and had borne him from the depths of political despair to the proudest of living positions. 'They say we are beaten by 73,' whispered the most important member of the Cabinet (Sir James Graham), in a tone of surprise, to Sir Robert Peel. Sir Robert did not reply, or even turn his head. He looked very grave, and extended his chin, as was his habit when he was annoyed and cared not to speak."

The great MINISTER, whose tenure of office was to exceed that of PITT and rival WALPOLE's, had fallen never to rise again. We may admire his sterling abilities and his sound Conservative instincts, we may appreciate his disinterested and patriotic motives, but we cannot but confess that his fall was just. With the best intentions and in perfect honesty, he had not only practised but formulated into a maxim the immoral and unconstitutional theory that the leader of a party has no duties towards that party, that he may use the influence they have given him to ruin his own followers. On this theory, if the leader

changes his principles while his followers do not change theirs, he is not bound to relinquish his seat, or to vacate the leadership to which he has been elected, but may use his position to force measures they detest down the throats of the men he represents. PEEL's two great tergiversations, though both beneficial at the moment to the country, shook confidence in public men, and set a bad precedent from which we still suffer. PALMERSTON and GREVILLE, RUSSELL and ERSKINE MAY, all of them Free Traders, agree in condemning his treatment of the Protectionists. Posterity, which sees the effect of his theory, does not approve it.

1846-52.

## CONSERVATIVE RE-ORGANISATION.

### *The Russell Ministry and the Peelites.*

ON June 29th, 1846, Sir ROBERT PEEL informed the House that his Government had resigned in consequence of the adverse vote on the Irish Bill, and that the Queen had entrusted Lord JOHN RUSSELL with the formation of a new Ministry. The new Cabinet was remarkable rather for the advantages of its position than for the talents of its members. Although Lord JOHN RUSSELL had in Lord PALMERSTON a foreign secretary of brilliant, though as yet unappreciated, abilities; in Sir CHARLES WOOD a chancellor of the exchequer contemptible as an orator, but respectable as an administrator; in Lord

GREY a vigorous, if independent, colonial secretary; in MACAULAY a first-class man of letters, if an inefficient paymaster-general; nevertheless the Ministry, as a whole, was strong neither in statesmanship nor in administrative capacity. They owed their official position not to the merits of themselves or of their party, but to division in the ranks of their opponents. PEEL could not hope to form a Government himself for years to come, and did not wish to see a Conservative Ministry in which he had no part seated on the Government benches. The "Peelite," in fact, having begun by causing a secession from the Tory party, had themselves become seceders. The Ministers were masters of the situation, not

on account of their own popularity, but, as Lord PALMERSTON said, "by virtue of the absence of any efficient competitors."\*

On taking office, Lord JOHN RUSSELL held out hopes of a progressive line of policy, and stated that great social improvements were required. He did not succeed during his tenure of office in justifying his promises. The Government were called upon to deal with the alleviation of the famine in Ireland, and to find some sort of remedies for commercial difficulties. But beyond such measures of immediate urgency, Lord JOHN RUSSELL had no legislative programme worthy of the name. He

could only turn his thoughts to the development of the Free Trade system. "I considered myself bound," he said, "to carry on the march of the Free Trade Army against monopolies in favour of Colonial sugar, of Canadian timber, and of English ships." Many competent judges held that to allow English merchants to send their cargoes by foreign ships would ruin the shipping interests, but the Navigation Laws were repealed in 1849 after a long Parliamentary struggle. The shipowners had supported PEEL in establishing Free Trade in corn, but turned to PEEL's opponents when their own monopoly was assailed. BENTINCK and DISRAELI assisted them with a zeal which proved that the Tories cared more for principles than for men or for classes.

The reduction of the sugar duties was proposed by Lord JOHN RUSSELL on July 20th, 1846. The policy of the English Government had hitherto been to maintain a prohibitive duty upon slave-grown sugar, and a protecting duty upon other kinds. Lord JOHN RUSSELL's proposal to substitute a small uniform duty was opposed by Lord GEORGE BENTINCK on the ground that it would both check the advance of production by free Englishmen and give a great additional stimulus to slave-labour. Sir ROBERT PEEL stated clearly his objections to the reduction of the duty, but supported Lord JOHN RUSSELL because he could not trust a Government formed by Lord GEORGE BENTINCK. In the result, the Ministry carried their point by 265 votes to 135.

#### *Irish Policy of the Government.*

Lord JOHN RUSSELL, though he had come into power by defeating Sir ROBERT PEEL on his Coercion Bill, had scarcely been in office a month before the Government introduced an Irish Arms Bill. The

\* Lord STANLEY thus described the state of parties shortly before the General Election of 1847:—"Not only is there no subject at this moment prominently occupying the public mind, but there seems to be a general confusion of parties, persons, and principles. Thus we find Lord John Russell, at the head of a Whig Government and supported by Radical followers, adopting for the present a strictly Conservative line of policy, courting the alliance and support of the Church, and braving the hostility of the Dissenters; Sir Robert Peel, the apostle of Expediency, professing entire abstinence from party, yet perpetually closeted with his under-strappers, interfering with every borough in the kingdom through his agents, and bent on keeping together a party whose bond of union shall be personal subservience to Sir Robert Peel. Lastly, I find myself in the position of watching, rather than opposing, a Government which I cannot trust, yet aware that on some points in which they are most likely to be attacked by those with whom I am acting, as for example on the question of education, I am unable to go the lengths of my supporters; and to add to all this personal confusion, we have the effects of the Free Trade policy completely obscured by the deficiencies of last year's harvest, and the consequent high price of grain, the result of which is that the farmers, who never look a yard beyond their noses, are completely apathetic and begin to think there is not so much harm in Free Trade after all. That they will ultimately find out their mistake, I do not doubt; but for the purpose of the present Election, it is vain to shut our eyes to the fact that Protection as a cry is dead."

Measure naturally aroused considerable opposition, and was speedily withdrawn. The difficulty of dealing with Ireland was increased by the influence of the "physical force" party. O'CONNELL entreated the Repealers not to be led away by violent enthusiasts, and to give the Government a fair trial, but the only effect was a split in "the tail." "Young Ireland" seceded under the leadership of SMITH O'BRIEN, while the older section remained true to O'CONNELL. O'CONNELL himself gave no further trouble of any sort to the Government. He died on his way to Rome, on May 15th, 1847, saddened by the failure of his plans, but comforted by the reflection that he had been the champion of what he believed to be "the cause of religion and liberty."

In their relief measures, the Ministers showed a conspicuous want of statesmanship. They "pottered with the difficulty," says Mr. M'CARTHY, "rather than encountered it." They closed the works set on foot by PEEL, in an attempt to combine the employment of the destitute on public works with the repayment of money advanced by the Treasury. Such was the intention of the Labour Rate Bill of 1846. The result was what Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR is justified in calling the "hideous demoralisation of Ireland," and Ministers met Parliament in the following year with the confession that the Bill had failed.\*

The new Measure of the Government—commonly called the "Soup Kitchen Act"—aimed at enabling the labourers to work on their own holdings by supplying them with

food through local relief committees acting in conjunction with the Guardians of the Poor. Lord GEORGE BENTINCK put forward a scheme for advancing sixteen millions to Irish railway enterprise. But it was as hopeless a task in 1847 as it has been ever since to convince the Liberal party that the welfare of Ireland is promoted rather by attracting capital into the sister island than by upsetting economical arrangements, or granting subsidies from the Imperial Exchequer. The House of Commons rejected BENTINCK's scheme by a majority of 214.

The hatred of England which characterises so many of the Irish race wherever they may be found, is derived from traditions of the famine. Private benefactions, however generous, were not able to blot out the incompetence of the Government and the heartlessness of Free Trade theorists.

#### *Social Legislation.*

More credit is due to Lord JOHN RUSSELL for his Education scheme, which, like its predecessor, had to encounter the opposition of the Dissenting Radicals, to whom the PREMIER administered the following dignified rebuke—"Be the opposition which we meet with what it may, however formidable it may be at this moment (and I lament to see it in such a cause withdrawing from us the aid and support of many who, through good report and through evil report, have supported our political course), yet be this disadvantage what it may, it will nevertheless be a consolation to me that I have

\* The state of Ireland at the beginning of 1847 may be gathered from the following quotation from the *Dublin Evening Post* of February 17th:—"Day by day the accounts that reach us are becoming more horrifying. There is scarcely a county in Ireland—unless Kildare may be an exception—in which the people are not dying of starvation. A correspondent from

Drogheda writes that wretched women and children were to be seen on the decks of steamers striving to appease their hunger with the turnips half eaten by the cattle on board. So far as can be ascertained, the workhouse mortality in Ireland for the first week of January was 1,405 out of 108,500 receiving relief, and in the second week 1,493 out of 110,561."

made an attempt to diminish the empire of ignorance, and to raise the people of this country in the scale of religion and virtue among the nations of the globe."

The most important measure passed by the Parliament of 1841 in its last Session was Lord ASHLEY'S "Ten Hours" Bill. He had failed to carry his new Factory Act in 1844 and in 1846, owing to the violent opposition of a Radical section. In 1847 he had not a seat in Parliament, and Mr. FIELDEN took charge of the Measure. The second reading was supported by the Government and by the Tory leaders, but the Radical opposition was renewed. Mr. BRIGHT warned the House that, "if they armed the workmen against the capitalists by giving the law of ten hours, or any other number of hours, for the duration of labour," he believed "it would be impossible that the feeling which hitherto had existed on the part of the manufacturers towards their workmen would continue, should the workmen think that by coming to that House they could fix the time of work and the amount of wages. He thought if such a result took place it would be the duty of the manufacturers—nay, that it would be absolutely necessary for them—to take such steps as would prevent the ruin from coming upon them which must result from the passing of this Measure." Mr. BRIGHT was a teller for the Noes on the second reading, and was supported by Mr. CARDWELL, Mr. HUME, and other Radical members, but the general feeling of the House was too strong for him, and the Bill was carried by 195 to 87. In Committee, Mr. BRIGHT and Mr. HUME fulfilled their threat to oppose the Bill "at every step," and it will always be remembered to the discredit of Lord JOHN RUSSELL that he voted with them for the omission of the "Ten Hours Clause." But public

opinion, both in Parliament and in the country, was loud in its expression of sympathy with the operatives, and in June the Bill became law.

*Position of Parties after the General Election of 1847.*

The General Election of 1847 made no substantial change in the strength of parties. The new House consisted of 226 Protectionists, 105 Peelites, and 325 Members, of miscellaneous opinions, who supported the Government under the name of the "Liberal" party. Sir ROBERT PEEL continued till the day of his death in 1850 to make it his object to keep the Protectionists out of power. His friends maintained their existence as a separate party, though the Protectionists still hoped that many of them would return to the Tory fold as soon as they saw that PEEL would never again be Prime Minister.

The Protectionists remained under the leadership of Lord GEORGE BENTINCK, who commanded the attention of the House by his masterly treatment of argument and of details. His brilliant lieutenant, DISRAELI, had not yet won the full confidence of the older Tories, to whom his originality was a puzzle.\* In 1847, Lord GEORGE BENTINCK supported the removal of Jewish Disabilities. This action caused great dissatisfaction, as DISRAELI says, "among a very respectable though limited section" of the Protectionists, and at the end of the

\* The admiration with which he was regarded by BENTINCK is illustrated by a letter from the latter to CROKER. "You ask me of Disraeli's manner of speaking and effectiveness in debate. I will answer you by giving you my brother Henry's observations on the various speakers in the House. Henry is rather a cynical critic. He expressed himself greatly disappointed with Sir Robert Peel and Lord John Russell, and concluded by saying that Disraeli was the only man he had heard who at all came up to his ideas of an orator."

year he ceased to be their leader. Lord GRANBY was asked to take his place, but declined. "It appears strange," writes Lord MAMESBURY in his Diary, "that in these proceedings Disraeli's name was not put forward, but, whoever may in future take the lead in the House of Commons by election, he must virtually and practically hold that office. There can be no doubt that there is a very strong feeling among Conservatives in the House of Commons against him. They are puzzled and alarmed by his mysterious manner, which has much of the foreigner about it, and are incapable of understanding and appreciating the great abilities which certainly underlie, and, as it were, are concealed by this mask."

Accordingly, when BENTINCK retired to the second bench below the gangway on the Opposition side, DISRAELI was left to occupy the leader's seat. DISRAELI says he wished to abandon the place in which he had been "unwillingly and fortuitously" placed, but "by the advice, or rather, at the earnest request, of Lord George Bentinck, this course was relinquished as indicative of schism." On September 21st, Lord GEORGE BENTINCK died. His death left DISRAELI and Lord STANLEY to carry out the work of Conservative re-organisation. The agriculturists soon discovered that the apathy of 1847 was a mistake. When high prices fell, they were loud in denunciation of PEEL as their "arch-enemy," and clamoured for the removal of the excessive charges on land. DISRAELI argued in each Session that, as Parliament had caused the distress of the land-owners and farmers by fiscal changes, it was bound to remove some of the burdens on the land. All, he said, that the owners and occupiers of the land asked for was justice. They did not shrink from competition, but asked not to be forced into it manacled. The Go-

vernment, while admitting the difficulties in which the agriculturists were placed, steadily refused to agree to any of DISRAELI's resolutions, though, in 1851, he was only defeated by a majority of 14.

#### *Liberal Opposition to Reform.*

While the Conservative leaders were pleading the cause of agriculture, the Ministers directed their efforts to curbing the impatience of their followers. With the RUSSELL Government began the internecine conflict between the official Whigs and the Radicals below the gangway. Lord JOHN RUSSELL had few principles in common with a HUME, a COBDEN, or a BRIGHT. In 1848, HUME represented cheese-paring and no income tax, COBDEN the reduction of armaments. In 1849, COBDEN moved to reduce expenditure from £54,185,000 to £44,422,000, the amount of the estimates in 1835, but the Government defeated him by 275 to 78. In the following year COBDEN renewed his attack, selecting for special condemnation "successive augmentations of our warlike establishments and outlays for defensive armaments," with a similar result. Lord JOHN RUSSELL showed equally small favour to "Reform." In 1848 he declared that neither the middle nor the working-classes were favourable to household suffrage. In 1851 Mr. LOCKE-KING obtained leave to bring in a Bill to reduce the franchise in counties to £10, and Mr. BERKELEY carried a motion in favour of the ballot, in both cases in the teeth of Government opposition. The House rejected a resolution moved by Mr. TRELAWEY in 1849 for abolishing Church rates by 183 to 20.

#### *Chartists and Special Constables.*

In 1848 considerable alarm was caused by the proceedings of the Chartists. The Chartist leaders said that their petition to Parlia-

ment had received more than five million signatures, and in order to convince the House of their strength they convened a mass meeting of their supporters on Kennington Common. They proposed to form the meeting into a procession, and to make their way in marching order to the door of the House of Commons. According to FEARGUS O'CONNOR and the other leaders, their intention was to make a great display of their "physical force." On the day of the meeting, extraordinary precautions were taken to prevent a disturbance. The Duke of WELLINGTON took charge of the military defence of London. Guards were stationed round the public buildings, and more than 4,000 soldiers were sent to Kennington Common. A quarter of a million of special constables were enrolled, Prince LOUIS NAPOLEON among the number. The event falsified both the predictions of the Chartists and the fears of the Government.

GREVILLE remarks "The intended tragedy was rapidly changed to a ludicrous farce. The Chartists, 20,000 in number, assembled on Kennington Common. Presently Mr. Mayne appeared on the ground, and sent one of his inspectors to say he wanted to speak to Feargus O'Connor. Feargus thought he was going to be arrested, and was in a terrible fright; but he went to Mayne, who merely said he was desired to inform him that the meeting would not be interfered with, but the procession would not be allowed. Feargus insisted on shaking hands with Mayne, swore he was his best of friends, and instantly harangued his rabble, advising them not to provoke a collision, and to go away quietly—advice they instantly obeyed with great alacrity and good humour. Thus all evaporated in smoke. Feargus himself then repaired to the Home Office, saw Sir George

Grey, and told him it was all over, and thanked the Government for their leniency, assuring him the Convention would not have been so lenient if they had got the upper hand. Grey asked him if he was going back to this meeting. He said, No; that he had had his toes trodden on till he was lame, and his pocket picked, and he would have no more to do with it."

The petition was presented to the House of Commons in the ordinary way. Instead of 5,706,000 there were only 1,975,472 signatures, mostly fictitious names. The Chartists were thoroughly discredited by these results of all their boasting. Many of the objects they had at heart were sound, but they failed to understand that great political changes are the work of time, and their impatience caused them to adopt methods which alienated the sympathy of all moderate men.

#### "Young Ireland."

In Ireland, SMITH O'BRIEN and his colleagues grew more and more turbulent. At first, they contented themselves with revolutionary talk, but in the spring of 1848 they caused serious anxiety by giving definite advice about the means and methods of warfare. On July 22nd, Lord JOHN RUSSELL carried the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, and the "Young Ireland" party saw that the hour had come when, if ever, they must make good their threats. But their attempts to create a rebellion were fruitless, if we except the ludicrous combat between a thousand men, armed with pikes and firearms, under the command of SMITH O'BRIEN, and a small body of constabulary, at Ballingarry. Not one of the police was injured, and O'BRIEN's party ran away in great confusion. The conviction of the ringleaders gave a death-blow to the "Young Ireland" movement, but the excite-

ment in Ireland continued, and the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act was renewed in the following year.

### *The Durham Letter.*

Towards the close of 1847, the Roman Catholic bishops were authorised by the Pope to adopt English titles. This act of "Papal Aggression," as it was called, gave rise to much indignation in ultra-Protestant circles, and for several years Protestant orators strove to rouse the country to resist the "encroachments of Romanism." In 1850, the country was startled by the letter addressed by Lord JOHN RUSSELL to the Bishop of DURHAM, in which he attacked the Roman Catholics, and said he was "still more alarmed" by the Tractarians. This letter was condemned by reasonable men of both parties.\* When Parliament met, in 1851, Mr. ROEBUCK censured the PRIME MINISTER for raising needless excitement. "Was it wise or worthy of the noble lord, so long the advocate of civil and religious liberty, to lend the sanction of his great name

to the puritanical bigotry of England?" DISRAELI followed on the same side, but Lord JOHN RUSSELL was forced to take some action to prove his sincerity, and on February 7th he introduced the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, by which he hoped to humble the Roman Catholic hierarchy.

### *A Ministerial Crisis.*

The progress of the Bill was interrupted by a Ministerial crisis. The moral victory of DISRAELI on the question of agricultural distress, and the success of Mr. LOCKE-KING's motion led to the resignation of the Government. The fall of Lord JOHN RUSSELL was almost as acceptable to the Radicals as to the Tories. Mr. BRIGHT said to ROEBUCK, "We will never stand Lord John as Prime Minister again." The QUEEN sent for Lord STANLEY, who at once set about the construction of a Cabinet. At Lord STANLEY's house there were present Mr. DISRAELI, Sir J. PAXTON, Lord MALMESBURY, Mr. WALPOLE, Lord HARDWICKE, Mr. HENLEY, Mr. HERRIES, Lord JOHN MANNERS, and Lord EGLINTON. Lord STANLEY suggested the posts to which he thought each should be appointed, and his views were opposed by none except Mr. HENLEY, who "made such difficulties about himself, and submitted so many upon various subjects, that Lord STANLEY threw up the game." Lord STANLEY announced his failure to form a Cabinet in the House of Lords, attributing it to want of experience in public business on the part of his supporters. He described his party as "numerous no doubt, but still undoubtedly in a minority in the House of Commons on several occasions; numbering in its ranks men of talent and intellect, but hardly one individual of political experience and versed in official business." "A great disadvantage for any party to

\* CROKER wrote to Lord BROUGHAM—"I hardly know what to think or say about this 'No Popery' paroxysm. I do not believe that there is much religious feeling at the bottom of it, for there is not, I think, much fear of any religious danger, and the most forward in the agitation have been your worthy friends, the Dissenters, who would have rather liked, as they did in James II's time, the encroachments of Popery on the Church; but who, on this occasion, come forward as partisans to support Lord John, and who are glad of the plausible (and with many the real) ground of their old aversion to Popery. The Anglican clergy join more reservedly. The most zealous are the Anti-Puseyites, who are glad of an occasion to *snub* the Tractarians, and the latter are willing (or, at least, most of them) to retreat back into a truer position. But I am, like you, unable to account for Lord John's letter, which seems to me to be at once rash and insidious—rash as against his friends the Romanists, insidious as against us; and the attempt to lay the blame of the Popish attempt on the Tractarians is really the old story of the wolf and the lamb."

labour under; but there is a third party in the House of Commons, not indeed very extensive numerically, but most important as regards official experience and talents—I mean that small party which has adhered to the policy of the late Sir Robert Peel." So the former Ministers returned to their places and to their Ecclesiastical Titles Bill. In their hearts they were ashamed of the cry their Chief had raised, and they tried to strike out the effective clauses of the Bill. The Measure passed into law, with several amendments, and remained on the Statute Book for twenty years as a monument of the bigotry and incapacity which disgraced the Parliament of 1847-52.

#### *Lord Palmerston as Foreign Secretary.*

The foreign policy of Lord PALMERSTON affords a pleasant contrast to the domestic legislation of his colleagues. He was popular with neither section of the party to which he nominally belonged. COBDEN and his friends were spoilt by the flattery they had received, and, when the Free Trade agitation was over, they devoted their efforts to spreading the principles of non-intervention, and "scouting" the national defences. With men of this school PALMERSTON had, of course, no sympathy at all. On the other hand, he was never in touch with his colleagues in the Ministry. They complained that he never consulted them, and that when they came to any decision on foreign affairs he quietly took his own course without the slightest regard to their wishes. But PALMERSTON knew his hold on the minds and affections of his countrymen. At few periods in her history had England greater need of a strong Foreign Secretary, for the years 1848 to 1851 witnessed revolutionary movements in almost all the countries of Europe. PALMERSTON was influenced by two main motives

—the protection of British interests and the encouragement of liberty abroad. The pressure which he brought to bear on the Greek Government to redress the injuries of British subjects gave rise to the memorable debate on June 24th, 1850, in which he delivered a five hours' defence of his policy. He said he deemed the doctrine advanced by the other side—that British subjects in foreign lands were entitled to no protection but that of the laws and tribunals of the country in which they might happen to be,—a doctrine on which no English Minister had acted, and which the people of England would never suffer. He "challenged the verdict of the House, whether the principles which had guided the foreign policy of the Government had been proper and fitting, and whether, as a subject of ancient Rome could hold himself free from indignity by saying *Civis Romanus sum*, a British subject in a foreign country should not be protected by the vigilant eye and the strong arm of his Government against injustice and wrong."

Though PALMERSTON's policy entirely deserved the admiration of the country, it must be admitted that his method of transacting business at the Foreign Office was wanting in respect to the Throne. The QUEEN had constantly to complain that the country was committed to measures about which she knew nothing, and that papers to which she had given her sanction were altered or modified by the Foreign Secretary. In December, 1851, when conversing with the French Ambassador, Lord PALMERSTON expressed his approval of the *coup d'état* of Louis NAPOLEON, without consulting the wishes of the QUEEN or his colleagues. Lord JOHN RUSSELL thereupon advised his dismissal from the Foreign Office. PALMERSTON, though treated without much

consideration or courtesy, accepted his dismissal with characteristic good humour. A quarrel with the SOVEREIGN was, as he had said on a previous occasion, "a step which no subject ought to take if he can possibly avoid it;" and he was content to wait for "his tit-for-tat with John Russell."

### *Fall of the Russell Ministry.*

After his return to power, Lord JOHN RUSSELL found it necessary to pledge himself to a Reform Bill. In a letter to CROKER, dated September 22, 1851, Lord DERBY\* said "I have not the least idea what John Russell's Reform Bill may be, and I doubt whether he knows himself; the pledge to bring it forward, one of his most unjustifiable acts, was, I believe, given without the knowledge of the Queen or of his colleagues, for the mere purpose of escaping an adverse division, in which, after all, he did not succeed. And now he is in the condition of a man in one of the old stories, who, having sold himself to the devil, is anxious to cheat the devil, and get out of his bargain." Lord DERBY, however, wished the Conservative leaders to be cautious of committing themselves to resist a change, which might have "a really Conservative tendency."

Soon after the opening of Parliament in 1852, Lord JOHN RUSSELL introduced his Bill. He denied that every man had a right to the suffrage, "seeing that the only object in view ought to be the good government of the country," and he wished to preserve the balance of county and borough representation, and small boroughs, "without which many able men would be excluded from Parliament." He proposed to lower the franchise, in boroughs to householders rated at

£5 instead of £10, and in counties to occupiers of houses rated at £20, and to give a vote to persons in counties or boroughs paying assessed or income tax to the amount of 40s. per annum. The Bill was coldly received, and before the second reading the Government was defeated on the Militia Bill. The Government proposed to establish the militia on a local plan, and PALMERSTON carried an amendment by 135 to 128 in favour of the old system of a regular militia. The Ministers tendered their resignation, and the QUEEN again sent for Lord DERBY.

### *Young and Untried Ministers.*

Lord DERBY, as we have seen, could scarcely find one experienced colleague in the Conservative party, but a coalition was impossible. Even Lord PALMERSTON declined to join him, on the ground that he feared a return to Protection, while the leading Peelites were drifting into Liberalism. DISRAELI, who had never held office before, became Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the House of Commons. Lord St. LEONARDS, the greatest equity lawyer of the reign, was Chancellor. Lord MALMESBURY, Sir J. PAKINGTON, and Mr. WALPOLE were respectively Foreign, Colonial, and Home Secretaries. Lord DERBY told Lady MALMESBURY that he was "driving a team of young horses; not one had ever been in harness before, and they went beautifully; not one kicked amongst them."

### *The General Election of 1852.*

The great difficulty which confronted the new PRIME MINISTER was the question of Protection. Lord DERBY and most of his lieutenants held that a revision of the policy of 1846 was desirable, but they promised that no proposition should be made until the verdict of the country had been

\* Lord STANLEY became Earl of DERBY in June, 1851.

obtained. "The next election," said Lord DERBY, "must finally decide, at once and for ever, the great question of our commercial policy." During the few months that intervened before the General Election, the Ministers acquitted themselves with credit. The Militia Bill, over which Lord JOHN RUSSELL had fallen, was carried in a satisfactory form, and DISRAELI established his capacity for leadership. The Conservatives hoped against hope that they would carry the General Election in the summer, but it was plain that their uncertain position in regard to Protection must be fatal. DISRAELI saw clearly that it was too late to reverse the Measure which he had condemned six years before. "The time has gone by"—so ran his election address—"when the injuries which the great producing interests endure can be alleviated or removed by a recurrence to the laws which, previously to 1846, protected them from such calamities. . . . But every principle of abstract justice and every consideration of high policy counsel that the producer should be treated as fairly as the consumer; and intimate that, when the native producer is thrown into unrestricted competition with external rivals, it is the duty of the Legislature in every way to diminish, certainly not to increase, the cost of production. . . . One of the soundest means by which this result may be accomplished is a revision of our taxation." The General Election returned a slightly increased number of Ministerialists. Lord MAMESBURY divided the new House into 292 Derbyites, 30 Peelites, 130 Whigs, 160 Radicals, and 50 members of the "Irish Brigade."

#### *Death of the Duke.*

On September 16th, before Parliament met, the great Duke of WELLINGTON died. The national

sentiment found expression in the words of the QUEEN. "Britain's pride, her glory, her hero, the greatest man she ever had produced, is no more. . . . One cannot think of this country without the Duke. In him centred every earthly honour. Above party, revered by the whole nation, the friend of the Sovereign. The Crown never found, and never will, so devoted, so loyal, and so faithful a subject."

#### *Disraeli's Budget—Defeat of the Government.*

On the opening of Parliament in November, Lord DERBY and DISRAELI stated that the Government bowed to the decision of the country, and had not the slightest intention of proposing a return to artificial prices. MR. VILLIERS proposed a resolution in praise of the Act of 1846, and condemning by implication those who had opposed it; but an amendment by Lord PALMERSTON, in favour of "a policy of unrestricted competition, firmly maintained and prudently extended," against which the Protectionists could muster only 53 votes, was accepted by the Government and carried.

The Government was, however, resolved to attempt a revision of taxation in the interests of agriculture, and DISRAELI'S financial statement of December 3rd was constructed on this basis. Its main features were the reduction of the Malt Tax, and of the Excise Duty on hops, and a corresponding increase in the Inhabited House Duty. DISRAELI displayed a skill in dealing with figures that won the admiration even of his opponents, but no section of the Free Trade party was inclined to entertain the redress of agricultural grievances. "I know what I have to face," said DISRAELI at the close of the debate, "I have to face a coalition. The combination may be successful. A

combination has been before this successful; but coalitions, though they may be successful, have always found that their triumphs have been but brief. This I know, that England does not love coalitions. And I appeal from the coalition to that public opinion whose wise and irresistible influence can control even the decrees of Parliament, and without whose support even

the most august and ancient institutions are but as the baseless fabric of a vision." The Government was defeated by a majority of 19, and DISRAELI accepted the result with his usual dignity and composure. As he left the House, he remarked to one of his friends, "It will be an unpleasant day for going to Osborne."

1852-55.

## A PATRIOTIC OPPOSITION.

### *The Coalition.*

WHEN DISRAELI said that an unprincipled coalition was forming against him he was complaining of no new thing, for the history of party warfare since the accession of the QUEEN recorded the coalition of three distinct bodies against the Tories who, though always stronger than any one of the three, were sometimes inferior to the collective mass.

Now, however, a fourth party enters into the arena. The Irish party, which was led by two of the most unprincipled men who have ever sat in the House of Commons (SADLEIR and KEOGH), was pledged not to accept office, but to press for tenant right. These pledges they promptly broke, and they were bought up without difficulty. KEOGH became solicitor-general for Ireland; SADLEIR, who subsequently committed forgery and suicide, a lord of the treasury. This was the method adopted by the Whigs for dealing with Ireland; they granted no reforms but secured Home Rule support by giving the leaders

lucrative places.\* The Peelites accordingly held the balance, and they determined to make the best of their position. Although they did not constitute one-twentieth part of the House, the Ministry was theirs in name and they had four places in the Cabinet. Lord ABERDEEN was Premier; Lord JOHN RUSSELL, at first, and subsequently Lord CLARENDON, took the Foreign Office; GLADSTONE was Chancellor of the Exchequer; GRAHAM was at the Admiralty; NEWCASTLE was Secretary for the Colonies and for War. PALMERSOHN, as Home Secretary, was the most interesting feature in the Cabinet; he had been offered the Foreign Office, but he declined for two reasons, of which the first is probably the

\* The Irish appointments were received with a shower of pasquinades. One of the best, which has a refrain of "Lord Aberdeen's listed the Irish Brigade," sums up the situation as follows:—

"Here's the list of appointments; all silent they grow—  
For the Treasury Sadleir, Solicitor, Keogh;  
O'Hallerty's booked for a berth on Cork-hill  
All the rest will be paid from the Government till."

more important. "Aberdeen and I," he writes, "had differed so widely for 25 years on all questions of foreign policy." . . . "It does not do for a man to spend the whole of his time in one department, and the Home Office brings one in contact with one's countrymen."

*Its want of Principle.*

What principles the Coalition Cabinet held in common it would, indeed, be difficult to say. Lord ABERDEEN, so far as he formed any political theories at all, sympathised with the Manchester School, had a strong objection to the military spirit, and looked upon a pitched battle as an obsolete relic of barbarism. But, like all Peelites, he had a loose hold on his opinions, and was quite competent to compromise "peace at any price" into war. PALMERSTON, on the other hand, was a statesman of Imperial instincts, of the type of PITT or CANNING; he regarded ABERDEEN with good-natured contempt. RUSSELL professed to be a reformer, although PALMERSTON disliked any extension of the Franchise; he viewed with suspicion the machinations of the POPE, but courted the support of the "Irish Brigade." What Mr. GLADSTONE's opinions were at this date it would be hard to say, nor would the enquiry lead to any important result, as they have been frequently and persistently changed. The result of these differences of opinion was that the Cabinet could not take up a strong line of policy either in home or foreign affairs without hopeless division and consequent compromise; but the strength of the coalition lay elsewhere. The greatest care had been taken to include all the men with any official experience, all the routinists, the red tape and sealing wax politicians. If the Government could not legislate, at least it could administer. The Peelites settled comfortably into the great spending

departments, convinced that an opportunity had arrived for showing the country what practical men of business could do.

*Palmerston as Home Secretary.*

Contrary to the general expectation, PALMERSTON was very successful as Home Secretary. He inaugurated many of those practical reforms in matters of detail which have a greater influence for good than many more showy measures. He first introduced the ticket-of-leave system to replace transportation, and he extended the operation of the Factory Acts. In such matters his personal benevolence supplied the place of professional philanthropy. Lord SHAFTESBURY leaves it on record that if the cause of poverty and affliction was at stake he could depend on the support of the man whom Radicals agreed to consider an airy trifler, when the professed friends of the working-classes left him in the lurch. He also undertook another very necessary reform by stopping intra-mural interments. When he went outside the confines of commonsense he was less happy. His answer to Lord STANLEY of ALDERLEY's application for special leave in the case of a church dignitary is in doubtful taste, and calculated to wound feelings that are deserving of respect. "Why should bishops and deans be buried under churches if other persons are not to be so? What special connection is there between church dignities and the privilege of being decomposed under the feet of survivors?" His winter assizes and Abatement of Smoke Bills all form part of a scheme of practical legislation not unlike Lord CROSS's policy from 1874 to 1880.

*Russell's Failure as a Reformer.*

Lord JOHN RUSSELL was still desirous of distinguishing himself as a Reformer, and resolved to introduce yet another Reform

Bill. The Measure was read a first time on February 13th, 1854. It proposed to disfranchise 66 seats, and to distribute them in the proportion of three to Scotland and 63 to England. Boroughs containing less than 300 electors and 3,000 inhabitants were to be disfranchised, and those with less than 500 electors and 10,000 inhabitants were to lose one member. The franchise was to be a £6 rating qualification in the boroughs, and £10 in the counties. The Bill, in some of the proposed fancy franchises, and in the gift of a seat to the University of London, resembled just those points in Disraeli's Bill which were afterwards attacked by the Liberals. There were essential objections to any attempt to deal with reform in 1854 which practically made the Bill hopeless. In the first place, there was no popular desire for Reform, and public opinion would not have approved of a thorough-going measure like household suffrage. Anything else was mere tinkering. In the second place, the beginning of a great war is not the proper time for a Reform Bill, with its attendant differences. On March 10th the Bill was withdrawn. Lord JOHN was so mortified that he nearly broke down in the House. Such were the principal features of the home legislation of the Coalition Ministry; in foreign affairs it had to deal with a serious crisis.

### *The Eastern Question.*

At the present time our differences with Russia are wide-spread and complicated. She is our rival for the sovereignty of Asia; she desires to be the political head of the Greek Church on the one hand, and of Mahomedanism on the other; she covets and threatens India; her armed cruisers and privateers are a menace to our Colonies. But in 1853 the Eastern Question centred in Constanti-

nople. Was Russia to be the Turk's assignee, was she to hold Constantinople? The question was put to the nation in this simple form, and was answered by an emphatic negative. Was that answer right?

The entrance to the Bosphorus is the point through which the land trade between Europe and Asia must pass, and therefore it always has been, and always will be, the site of a large and prosperous city. That city must control the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, and consequently is the key to the Black Sea. Two-thirds of the trade which passes through those two narrow channels—they only average about three miles in breadth—is English. If Russia seized Constantinople, that trade would be destroyed.

The political importance of Constantinople is even greater than the commercial. In the first place, it is an almost impregnable strategic position, for it can only be approached on the land side by way of the lines of Tchekmedje, which are 22 miles long, and could be defended against the world by a small force; and by sea through a narrow channel, 47 miles long by three broad. The possession of Constantinople carries with it a preponderance in Asia Minor and in Southern Europe, countries which contain 500,000 of the best soldiers in the world. The celebrated Golden Horn is a harbour which will hold 1,200 ships, and cannot be assailed with any prospect of success. The consequence is that Constantinople, in the hands of Russia, would dominate the Mediterranean. From these advantages Constantinople would seem to be marked out by its position for the capital of the world. NAPOLEON the First said that a first-class power in possession of Constantinople would be mistress of the world.

Russia, at present, is only vulnerable through the Black Sea. If she once gets command of the Dardanelles she could not be attacked at all. The possession of Constantinople would therefore give Russia enormous increase of power and absolute safety from foreign attack. Such were the issues then at stake.

#### *Dispute about the Holy Places.*

But the immediate cause of the Crimean war arose not at Constantinople but at Jerusalem. There had long been a dispute between the Latin and Greek Churches as to the guardianship of the Holy Places. France, by a treaty of the time of FRANCIS the First, was in some sense protector of the Latin Church at Jerusalem. NAPOLEON III. wished to surround with the lustre of antiquity his very recent assumption of power, and wished also to appear as the Catholic prince in Europe. Accordingly, the French Ambassador at Constantinople, partly by diplomacy, partly by threats, obtained for the Latin Patriarch the keys of the Church at Bethlehem, and the right to place a silver star, adorned with the arms of France, in the sanctuary of the Nativity. This French interference roused Russia. NICHOLAS considered himself the head of the Greek Church. He claimed the right to intervene between the PORTE and its Christian subjects on the ground of a formal treaty granting that power. The interpretation of the treaty of Kutchuk-Kainardji, 1774, decides the case for or against Russia. The clauses on which the CZAR based his right to protect the Greek Church in Turkey are clause 9 and clause 14. In clause 9 the PORTE promised "to protect constantly the Christian religion and its churches, and to allow the Russian Ambassador to make on all occasions representations in favour of the new church in Constantinople

and those who officiated in it, such representations to be considered as made by a sincerely friendly power." Clause 14 declares that the new church to be built at Galata "shall always be under the protection of the Ministers of the Russian Empire." On the face of it the treaty is perfectly plain. Russia has the right to make friendly representations on behalf of, and to protect a particular church and its priests. MR. GLADSTONE is the only statesman of eminence outside Russia who has considered that the right to protect a single church in a given country carries with it the right to protect all the subjects of that country who hold the same religion, but, in 1854, he was of the opposite opinion, and perhaps in this, as in other cases, his first thoughts were best. The question is one of paramount importance. If Russia was right, then a dual authority existed in Turkey, and the Christians were subjects of two masters—a titular Sovereign in the SULTAN, and a real Sovereign in the CZAR. The PORTE realised that its existence depended on this question. The CZAR, relying on his pretended rights, also threatened intervention on behalf of the Greek Church.

#### *The Czar's Proposals.*

The fact was the CZAR conceived that the time had come for a partition of Turkey after the manner of the partition of Poland. France and England were his only possible opponents. If he could secure England his scheme would be easy and practicable. In 1844 he had visited England, and had many interviews with Lord ABERDEEN, at that time Foreign Secretary. Misled by his lordship's timid, indefinite language, he thought he had a workable understanding with England. Lord ABERDEEN was his personal friend, and was now Prime Minister.

NICHOLAS accordingly sounded Sir HAMILTON SEYMOUR, the British Ambassador:—"If your Government has been led to believe that Turkey retains any element of existence, your Government must have received incorrect information. I repeat to you that the sick man is dying, and we can never allow such an event to take us by surprise. We must come to an understanding, and this we should do, I am convinced, if I could hold but ten minutes' conversation with your Ministers. I do not ask for a treaty or a protocol, a general understanding is all I want—that between gentlemen is sufficient." His conditions were three in number:—(1) Constantinople to be held neither by France or England, nor by Russia; (2) No powerful Greek Empire to be set up; (3) The Turkish Empire not to be broken up into little Republics. "Rather than submit to any of these arrangements I would go to war as long as I have a man and a musket left." "The Principalities, are, in fact, an independent state under my protection. Servia and Bulgaria might receive the same government. You can take possession of Egypt and Candia."

#### *Vacillation of the Cabinet—Firmness of Lord Palmerston.*

The Cabinet was both startled and shocked by these proposals, but NICHOLAS, though disappointed, calculated that he might safely go on with his policy alone. On the question of the Holy Places, England was committed in his favour, for Lord JOHN RUSSELL, as Foreign Minister, had declared, on January 28th, with about as much sense as grammar, "Her Majesty's Government cannot avoid perceiving that France was the first to disturb the *status quo*, in which (*sie*) the matter rested. Not that the disputes of the Latin and Greek Churches were not very active, but without the action of France those troubles

would never have troubled the relations of the Powers." The Protectorate over the Greek Church could be used as a lever to break up the Turkish Empire, and so Prince MENSCHIKOFF was sent to Constantinople to enforce it. But he carried out an unpleasant task in an unpleasant manner, and, after an ultimatum, which was not accepted, on May 5th, he left Constantinople on May 15th, covering his retreat with vague but formidable menaces. Meanwhile, the force of public opinion in England drove the Government to take up an attitude of opposition to Russia.

#### *Russia Occupies the Principalities.*

Lord PALMERSTON alone saw his way clear. He was on good terms with the Emperor of the French, and aimed at opposing an Anglo-French alliance to Russian ambition. In a Cabinet minute of May 22nd, he described the unvarying Russian method accurately and concisely. "The policy and practice of the Russian Government has always been to push forward its encroachments as far as the apathy of other Governments would allow it to go, but always to stop and retire when it met with decided resistance." It "has two strings to its bow—moderate language at Petersburg and London; active aggression by agents on the scene of operations." "If the local agents fail, they are recalled and disavowed. If the aggressions succeed, they are accepted as a *fait accompli*, unintentional indeed, from which the Czar cannot in honour retire."

Russia, however, was convinced that under no circumstances would ABERDEEN go to war, and therefore the CZAR announced and carried out in June the occupation of the Danubian Principalities, a part of the Turkish Empire, not, as he declared, in order to begin a war, but to have in his hands a pledge to guarantee his just rights.

Declaration or no declaration, it was an act of war against Turkey, but that Power was induced to offer no opposition on grounds of expediency. The English and French fleets were sent to Besika Bay; then the diplomatists set to work and produced, at Vienna, the Note of the Four Powers. This Note passed unobserved before the not very keen eyes of Lord CLARENDON, but Lord STRATFORD, British Ambassador at Constantinople, pointed out to the PORTE that the Note implied the Protectorate. The SULTAN, therefore, declined to accept it; the Cabinet's eyes were opened to the trap, and they backed up Turkey in her refusal. PALMERSTON now desired to send the fleets up the Bosphorus. "Were England and France to be precluded from entering the back door as friends, whilst the Russians have taken possession of the front hall as enemies?" ABERDEEN declined, admitting the step to be popular, but adding, with a Peelite's distrust of the people, "In such a case I doubt popular support."

#### *Aberdeen's Timidity the Cause of War.*

PALMERSTON returned to the attack. "The Russian Government has been led on, step by step, by the apparent timidity of the English Government, and by reports that the British Cabinet had declared that it would have peace at any price," which were not "sufficiently contradicted by overt acts." "It is the burglar who declares that he will not leave the house until the policeman has retired from the courtyard." The last sentence refers to a statement that Russian troops would not evacuate Turkish territory until the allied fleets left Besika Bay. "The fact was," says PALMERSTON's biographer, Mr. ASHLEY, "he knew that private communications, tinctured by the personal bias of the PREMIER, were doing

irreparable mischief, being interpreted by Baron Brunnow to mean . . . an insuperable dislike on the part of England to take any active measures against Russia."

On November 1st Russia declared war against Turkey, and PALMERSTON, still hoping against hope, made another appeal to ABERDEEN to send the fleet into the Black Sea. He felt and said that a firm demeanour might still prevent a collision between Turkey and Russia, and might avert war. ABERDEEN again declined. With a feeble ingenuity peculiarly his own, he had authorised Lord STRATFORD to send for the fleet if necessary, but privately instructed him not to do so. The result was that Russia had complete control of the Black Sea, and took advantage of that position to surprise the Turkish fleet at Sinope, on November 30th. 3,000 Turks were massacred, and the fleet was destroyed. This event made war inevitable. A fierce excitement, an uncontrollable indignation spread throughout the length and breadth of England. The massacre of Sinope decided the English people in favour of war. The responsibility for that massacre rests on Lord ABERDEEN's shoulders. If the British fleet had entered the Black Sea, the Turks would have been saved, and, humanly speaking, the war might have been avoided.

#### *Resignation of Lord Palmerston, and decision of the Cabinet.*

ABERDEEN seemed perfectly dazed by the difficulties he had to deal with, and still proposed to do nothing; but Lord PALMERSTON would wait no longer, and tendered his resignation on December 16th, nominally on RUSSELL's Reform Bill, but really because the nation would never forgive a vacillating policy at such a crisis. He writes, on Dec. 19, to his friend Mr. SULIVAN explaining his position — "The

*Times* says there has been no difference in the Cabinet about Eastern affairs. This is an untruth; but I felt that it would be silly to go out because I could not have my own way about Turkey." This resignation was an argument which ABERDEEN could understand. Appeals to patriotism and national honour he regarded with a calm and complacent cynicism, but any immediate danger to his Government aroused him to an unwonted energy. By the 25th PALMERSTON had returned to office, and could write informing SULLIVAN that "Their (the Ministers') earnest representations and the knowledge that the Cabinet had, on Thursday, taken a decision on Turkish affairs entirely in accordance with opinions which I had long unsuccessfully pressed upon them, decided me to withdraw my resignation." "Of course what I say to you about the Cabinet decision on Turkish affairs is entirely for yourself, but it is very important and will give the allied squadrons command of the Black Sea."

#### *The Czar's Manifesto.—The Quakers' Mission.*

Some hopeless and hollow negotiations were still to follow, such as the Second Note of the Four Powers, and the letter of the Emperor of the French. But on February 8th, Baron BRUNNOW, the Russian Ambassador, asked for his passports and left London. Throughout the controversy CONDEN, BRIGHT, and the Peace party had been resisting hostilities, but, as they objected to war on principle, the country paid little attention to them when they went about objecting to this war in particular. The most strange device that ever entered the head of man was invented by them for the furtherance of their objects. It was determined to send a deputation to the CZAR begging for peace. It never

occurred to them that they had no right to make England a laughing stock throughout Europe. They did not see that, with a Power like Russia, any signs of hesitation or pusillanimity were calculated to precipitate hostilities. Accordingly, on February 10th, three respectable Quakers—named respectively STERGE, PEASE, and CHARLTON—had an interview with NICHOLAS, to do what no Englishman had ever done before, to beg for peace from an arrogant foe. The effect of the deputation was just what might have been anticipated. Convinced that he had to do with a divided nation, the CZAR issued his Manifesto on February 21st. "England and France have ranged themselves by the side of the enemies of Christianity against Russia fighting for the orthodox faith. But Russia will not alter her divine mission."

#### *War declared.—Aberdeen's Scruples.*

On February 27th, England, by way of answer to the manifesto, sent her ultimatum, demanding the evacuation of the Principalities before April 30th, but the CZAR thought it unbecoming to give any answer, and so, on March 11th, the English fleet left Spithead for the Baltic. BRIGHT exerted himself to the utmost. He opposed the declaration of war in the Commons, telling the taxpayer that he was taking a Turk upon his back. On March 13th he attacked Lord PALMERSTON for the "reckless levity" with which he welcomed the war. PALMERSTON, losing his temper for the first time in his life, made a bitter reply. "I am convinced," he said, "that the opinion of the country in regard to me will in no way be influenced by anything the hon. member may say. I therefore treat his censure with the most perfect indifference and contempt."

On March 22nd war was solemnly declared in the city of London. The barriers were down and the

lists were set. Meantime, Lord ABERDEEN was in a pitiable condition of mind. Contrary to his own wish, and without any impulse of his own, he had drifted, as Lord CLARENDON admitted, into war. He said he could only conduct it with a view to a speedy peace, and he was so doubtful as to the justice of his cause that he could not conscientiously order public prayers for the success of the British arms. Lord SHAFESBURY attempted to remove his scruples in vain. "What you said to me yesterday terrified me, for it implied that the country had entered on a war which you could so little justify to your conscience as to be almost unable to advise public prayers for success. . . . You asked whether the English nation would be brought to pray for the Turks? Surely, if they are brought to fight for them, they would be induced to pray for them in a just quarrel." Concerning the charge of direct responsibility for an avoidable war laid against Lord ABERDEEN, COBDEN afterwards said—"I look back with regret on the vote which changed Lord Derby's Government. I regret the result of that motion, for it has cost the country 100 millions of treasure, and between thirty and forty thousand good lives." DISRAELI said—"I speak of what I know, not what I believe, but of what I have evidence to prove—the Crimean war would never have happened if Lord Derby had remained in office."

The Conservative Opposition, although they could not approve of the Ministerial proceedings, were yet prepared, in such a crisis, to give the Government a frank and patriotic support. Their policy was formally stated in the House of Commons by DISRAELI. "I can answer for myself and my friends, that no future Wellesley on the banks of the Danube will have to make a bitter record of the exertions of an English Opposition, that de-

preciated his efforts and ridiculed his talents."

#### *Bad Administration.*

The events of the war, however important and honourable, do not fall within our province, but it remains to be told how the Ministers made good their boasted claims to be good Administrators. Would they conduct with energy and ability a war that was unnecessary in its inception? The troops were landed in the Crimea without any preparation for a lengthy campaign. As the winter, which was terribly severe, drew on, the sufferings of the unhappy men became intense. FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE writes, "Eleven men died in the night simply from exhaustion from want of nourishment." Sick and wounded perished wholesale. Totally unsupplied with tools they were unable to make a road from Balaklava to Sebastopol, and consequently supplies ran short. Medical stores, which would have saved many a brave man's life, were left rotting at home, or were openly sold in the bazaars at Constantinople. The privates were exposed, half-starved and thinly clad, to the bitter cold, and many were found frozen to death in the trenches and on the heights. The finest army in Europe was rotting away in Crimean swamps. When this state of things was revealed in the *Times*, the whole country was moved with grief and indignation.

#### *Russell Resigns.*

Lord JOHN RUSSELL, on November 17th, addressed a protest to Lord ABERDEEN, his intention being to get rid of the Secretary of State for War, the Duke of NEWCASTLE. "A man," he said, "was needed who, from experience of military details and inherent vigour of mind, can be expected to guide the great operations of war with success." That man was Lord PALMERSTON.

So far, Lord JOHN RUSSELL had acted well and reasonably. He was not a friend of PALMERSTON, and could have been actuated by no selfish motives. He received an answer worthy of Lord ABERDEEN. It would be unfair to the DUKE, and would weaken the Government. When Parliament met, the storm broke. Mr. ROEBUCK, a Liberal member, both energetic and eloquent, gave notice of a motion for inquiry into the conduct of the war. RUSSELL therefore resigned, giving as his reason, "I do not see how it is to be resisted, but, as it involves a censure upon some of my colleagues, 'my only course is to tender my resignation.'" This resignation has been generally and justly impugned. Lord SHAFTESBURY describes it as selfish. "Russell has chosen this time to send in his resignation and break up the Government! Can anyone who knows the man and his antecedents doubt that self-seeking, place-loving ambition aims at the Premiership, and jeopardises everything for his own particular?" And PALMERSTON himself, notwithstanding the move in his favour, and his own dissatisfaction with the conduct of the war, wrote to Lord JOHN expressing his disapproval. "I think your decision ill-timed. . . .

If you had determined not to face such a motion, an announcement a fortnight ago would have rendered it more easy for your colleagues to take the necessary steps." "There are Constitutional and practical grounds on which the motion might be resisted."

### *Defeat of the Government.*

Deserted by RUSSELL, the Cabinet was in a bad way. PALMERSTON could only meet ROEBUCK indirectly, by saying that his motion was inopportune; he did not, and could not, deny the alleged mismanagement. In the temper the House was in, such a defence carried little weight, and, when the division was taken, a majority of 157 appeared against the Government, the numbers being, for the motion 305, against it 148. When the numbers were announced, for a few seconds the House sat in amazed silence at a defeat so crushing, and then burst into shouts of derisive laughter. The Ministry of All the Talents was dead. As the *Times* said the next morning, "It would tax the best-read historical student to produce a more complete case of political collapse than that which it is England's ill-fate, sore cost, we had almost said foul dis-honour, to witness this day."

1855-59.

## LORD DERBY AND LORD PALMERSTON.

### *Lord Derby's Mistake.*

**O**N the fall of the Cabinet, the QUEEN sent for Lord DERBY. In undertaking to form a Government, he was at first full of hope. He

thought he would be supported both by Lord PALMERSTON and by GLADSTONE and GRAHAM. His negotiations with PALMERSTON broke down, not on any question of principle, but because PALMERSTON insisted on retaining Lord

CLARENDON at the Foreign Office. Thereupon, on February 4th, without consulting any of his party, he abandoned the undertaking. This was the fatal mistake of his career. If the Conservatives had taken office in 1855, and brought the war to a successful conclusion, Lord DERBY would have occupied a position in the eyes of the country similar to that of Lord PALMERSTON, and a Conservative Ministry might, without difficulty, have been in power from 1855 to 1865. During the whole of that period the country was governed by PALMERSTON, not merely on Conservative, but almost on re-actionary principles. He lived on the prestige he had acquired in the Crimean war, and did not even pretend to apply Liberal principles to home legislation.

#### *Lord Derby's Character.*

Lord DERBY, in many respects, was a brilliant and dashing leader. As an orator, he must be classed with BRIGHT, GLADSTONE, and Bishop WILBERFORCE, as one of the four most eloquent men of the reign. Severe critics considered him the best of the four. His intellect was rapid, accurate, and piercing, obscured by no prejudices and biassed by no partialities. He was a good classic, a man of much culture and literary taste; like Mr. GLADSTONE, he spent his idle hours in the society of HOMER. In pure ability PALMERSTON could not compare with him. But with these great qualities he combined serious faults. His wit was keen, but bitter and ill-advised; he was impatient to recklessness, and deficient in the qualities of party management. The stirring debate, the resounding speech, the sharp conflict of parties, in all these he delighted, but the cares of office he neither envied nor prized. As Earl of Derby and leader of the House of Lords, he occupied a

position to which even the premiership of England could add little lustre. Two reasons have been given for his refusal. He was unwilling to face a great administrative crisis with a party imperfectly trained in the routine of office, and he expected that PALMERSTON would fail and that he would be able to make his own terms.

#### *Unpatriotic Conduct of the Peelites.*

The QUEEN next sent for Lord JOHN, but, in PALMERSTON's own words, "John Russell, by the way in which he suddenly abandoned the Government, had so lost caste for the moment, that I was the only one of his political friends who would serve under him." PALMERSTON accordingly held the field, though he found it difficult to deal with the Peelites, who were sore at the downfall of ABERDEEN and NEWCASTLE. "I see," he writes, "that the Peelite section still continues to endeavour to make itself a little separate section." They, in fact, were trying, as of old, to hold the balance between the two parties. GRAHAM and GLADSTONE joined the Ministry, but only to resign when PALMERSTON found it necessary to accept Mr. ROEBUCK's enquiry. The behaviour of the Peelites has been severely criticised. They had mismanaged the war themselves, and, when Lord DERBY was trying to form a patriotic ministry of all parties, they refused to join. Yet, after they had made PALMERSTON the only possible Premier, they did their best to break up his Government on grounds of mere personal pique, thus throwing a serious obstacle in the way of the vigorous prosecution of the war. Conduct so unpatriotic does not admit of palliation, much less of defence. The result was that PALMERSTON had to prosecute the war with a weakened Cabinet, attacked by the "peace at any price" party and harassed by the

vacillation of NAPOLEON III. That he could not, under such circumstances, inflict a crushing defeat on Russia is obvious, and it is wonderful that he was able to obtain an advantageous peace. But he had a just confidence in his own inexhaustible energy and determination, which entitled him as a War Minister to rank second only to WILLIAM Pitt.

*Lord Palmerston's Character and Principles.*

Lord PALMERSTON is the paradox of politics. The friend of Democracy abroad, its opponent at home, hated alike by absolute monarchs and theoretic Radicals, a lover of liberty, who disliked reform, he seems at first sight an insoluble riddle, so that the historian who finds PALMERSTON amongst the Liberals, like a fly in amber, may well wonder how he got there. The truth is that PALMERSTON, in foreign affairs, represented the most enlightened Tory policy. He had sat at the feet of CANNING, and had, from his lips, learnt the principles of the great Pitt. His policy rested on three axioms:—(1) That a British Minister should go to war only on behalf of British interests; (2) That where British interests are concerned his motto should be “my country right or wrong;” (3) That where the cause of freedom is at stake, as against reactionary despotism, England should use all the influence in her power, short of war, in the cause of freedom. Pitt's opposition to the partition of Poland, CANNING's intervention in Spain and Greece, the assistance given by PALMERSTON to the cause of Italian Unity, are all instances of the application of the last principle. In home affairs he was a cheerful optimist. The English, he thought, were the freest and best nation upon earth, with a perfect Constitution. So convinced was he of the excellence

of British institutions, that he was constantly trying to set up imitations of them in every European country with whose affairs he could conveniently interfere. It never occurred to him that there could be either a political situation or a national temperament to which they were unsuited. He thought, with the Duke of WELLINGTON, that a Government so admirable ought not to be altered. PALMERSTON joined the Whigs because he was disgusted at the treatment that CANNING received from PEEL and WELLINGTON. He continued, to the day of his death, an old-fashioned Tory at heart, looking upon an extension of the franchise as an unpleasant, awkward, and doubtful enterprise, which should be put off as long as possible. His patriotism, his good humour and his jokes made him the hero of his fellow-countrymen, even while he was refusing them a vote. He could not, as leader of the Liberals, put in force his real opinions; and his home policy was throughout a mere pretence and sham. Even in 1831, in the GREY Ministry, GRAHAM found him “not very much disposed for the work we were engaged in.”

*Violence of the Manchester School.*

Difficulties arose at the outset. Lord JOHN RUSSELL had been sent to Vienna, and there agreed to terms of which the Cabinet could not approve. The attacks of Sir EDWARD LYNTON on the one side, and of COBDEN and BRIGHT on the other, at last compelled him to resign. Thereupon he became unfavourable to the war. The violence of the Manchester men was PALMERSTON's chief difficulty at home. Mr. BRIGHT may be passed over as a man always prone to ill-considered and indiscriminate remarks; but on June 5th, 1855, COBDEN made an attack upon the war which deserves to be recorded. The war was in full swing, but very

delicate negotiations were pending at Vienna. COBDEN declared:—“I have said from the first ‘do not send a man to the Continent or Turkey in the capacity of a land force.’” “There seems to be no other object in taking Sebastopol than knocking about the ears of brave men a certain amount of bricks and mortar and rubbish, sacrificing an immense amount of human life in order that we may point to those mounds and say ‘we did it.’” He had heard that the war was regarded with increasing dislike by the people of France. “It is whispered,” he said, “that the French dynasty has so much at stake that it dare not withdraw the army from Sebastopol on account of the moral effect it would produce on the French people.” He jeered at his country’s “infatuation in invading Russia with a land force.” “If you send an army to invade Russia, you must prepare yourselves for inevitable disaster.” He blamed “the Government for behaving falsely and treacherously to the people.” “I have seen a spirit out of doors which is preparing for sudden and strange freaks of revenge, under a sense of bitter mortification.” The whole speech was a foolish and indecent display, eminently calculated to encourage Russia, to disgust France, and to embarrass the Government. Though embarrassed, PALMERSTON was not turned from his purpose. “The British nation,” he writes, “is unanimous. I say unanimous, for I cannot reckon Cobden, Bright, and Co. for anything.”

#### *Result and Cost of the War.*

On March 30th, 1856, the treaty of peace with Russia was signed. Russia had to cede Bessarabia, to declare the Black Sea neutral and interdicted to war ships, and to remove her claim to protect the Christian subjects of Turkey. England had lost 24,000 men by the

war, of whom about one-sixth fell in battle or died of their wounds. The incompetence of Lord ABERDEEN cost England some 16,000 gallant soldiers. The Committee of Inquiry is decisive as to the responsible parties, for the report declares that “The Administration which ordered the expedition had no adequate information as to the forces in the Crimea,” and “were not acquainted with the strength of the fortresses or the resources of the country.” “They made no provision for a winter campaign.”

#### *The Opium War.*

The Ministers needed whatever prestige they had derived from an energetic prosecution of the war, for they were soon brought face to face with the Chinese question. That a Cabinet which had weathered a violent storm, should be nearly overturned by a puff of wind is an interesting, but not uncommon event. For some years there had been a smuggling trade in opium between China and India, largely in English hands. This trade, though ostensibly forbidden by the Chinese Government, was usually connived at by the Chinese officials, but its illegal character led to occasional difficulties. The English Government had to consider whether they could suppress, or whether they could legalise it, for it could hardly go on in its present questionable form. The seizure of a Chinese vessel, the notorious lorcha *Arrow*, which, by a special licence, sailed under the English flag; and the insolent proclamation of the Chinese Commissioner YEH, who offered a reward for every Englishman’s head, increased the difficulties of the situation, though the Chinese Government was quite ready to make some amends for these grievances. The opium traffic has long been a sore point to the British conscience, for it has always seemed immoral to force on an un-

willing people a drug which the rulers declare to be a scourge. On the other hand, it is not easy to see how the British Government could put down the traffic unless the Chinese Executive gave a hearty co-operation. It has been urged, too, with much truth, that to the Chinaman opium is a medical necessity, on account of his malarious climate and his vegetarian diet. It is also clear that the real object of the Chinese Government was not to stop the use of opium, but to exclude foreign competition. These arguments afford good ground for defending the trade when legally established by treaty rights, but cannot justify war in order to obtain the concession of such commercial rights. It appeared to the Conservative Opposition that to compel China, by force of arms, to admit a drug, which was to some extent noxious, was a policy hard to support and harder to defend. The Manchester men, who hated PALMERSTON, and the Peelites who envied him, were against the Government on this question. On March 2nd, PALMERSTON was beaten, on COBDEN'S motion condemning his Chinese policy, by 263 to 249.

#### *Appeal to the Country.*

He instantly dissolved Parliament, and the elections went in favour of the Government. The Conservatives lost slightly, as they returned with 284 members, but the Manchester men were utterly routed, COBDEN and BRIGHT losing their seats at Manchester. The Conservatives were damaged by their supposed alliance with the Peelites, who, as SIDNEY HERBERT admitted, were weak and discredited. GLADSTONE, who had spoken in favour of COBDEN'S motion, inclined to the Conservative ranks. COBDEN deserved his defeat, if only on account of the virulence with which he had attacked the PREMIER. He had even raked up

the old collision between the mob and the yeomanry at Peterloo in 1819, in order to argue that PALMERSTON was directly responsible for the lives then lost, because he was a subordinate member of the Ministry at the time. The real cause of PALMERSTON's success was his personal popularity, for the election turned on his name. After the failure of this attack, his power seemed permanent and unassailable. Scarcely had the new Parliament met when tidings of the outbreak of the Mutiny in India reached this country. That tragedy, so replete with pathetic and heroic incidents, must ever be a matter of sorrowful interest to Englishmen; but, as neither party was deserving either of blame for the outbreak or of praise for its suppression, it is not strictly within the limits of our subject, and the points in which the rebellion comes in contact with English Constitutional history will be dealt with more conveniently later on.

#### *The Orsini Plot.*

In January, 1858, PALMERSTON seemed as strong as ever, but on the 14th an event occurred in Paris which was to have a serious effect on his fortunes. On the evening of that day, ORSINI, an Italian, attempted to assassinate NAPOLEON III., by means of an explosive bomb. The attempt failed, but 10 bystanders were killed, and 156 were wounded. The shell which blew up the EMPEROR'S carriage shattered the English Ministry. ORSINI had procured the bombs in Birmingham, having but recently left England, where he had been well received in society. The French Foreign Minister wrote a dispatch suggesting some change in the English law with regard to foreign conspirators. "Ought English legislation," he asked, "to continue to shelter persons who by their flagrant acts put themselves

outside the pale of common rights?" At this period the rights of asylum were held peculiarly sacred in England. All the political scoundrels in Europe were free to plot against their native Governments from London, not only without obstruction but even with sympathy. Recent events have shown us that our doctrine of asylum can be turned against ourselves in a highly inconvenient manner, and we doubt whether, after the dynamite outrages, Englishmen are quite as enthusiastic as they were about the sacred rights of conspiracy.

#### *French Animosity.*

On the main question, France was quite right, but a proud and powerful nation will not tolerate threats even when they are employed to support reasonable demands. "France," said the French Ambassador, "may cease to believe in England's sincerity." Certain French colonels, in addresses to the EMPEROR which were printed in the official *Moniteur*, were even more out-spoken. England was described as "the land of impurity which contains the haunts of monsters who are sheltered by its laws." Another gallant colonel proposed that "the infamous haunt in which machinations so infernal are planned" (London, to wit) "should be destroyed for ever." These utterances produced great, and natural exasperation in the minds of the English people.

#### *Ministers Defeated.*

PALMERSTON, according to his habit when in difficulties at home, introduced a Conspiracy to Murder Bill, which was really useless for the matter in hand, but gave an appearance of zeal for the EMPEROR, making conspiracy to murder a felony instead of a misdemeanour. The only practical measure would have been either an extradition treaty, or a power of

expelling suspicious foreigners. PALMERSTON'S Bill was both useless and unpopular. A prominent member of the Manchester party, MILNER GIBSON, who had been beaten in the General Election but had since returned to Parliament, full of zeal to avenge the defeat of 1857, moved a hostile amendment on the second reading. DISRAELI and GLADSTONE, again fighting side by side, spoke for the amendment. The division was taken on February 19th, and showed for the second reading 218 votes against 234, the majority being composed of 146 Conservatives and 84 Liberals. Only eleven months had elapsed since the crushing defeat inflicted on the Manchester men, yet they had succeeded in overthrowing their conquerors. The Ministry at once resigned.

#### *Second Derby-Disraeli Administration.*

Lord DERBY took office, and DISRAELI again led the House of Commons. Two useful measures were passed, one abolishing the property qualification for members of Parliament, the other removing Jewish disabilities. The Indian Mutiny had shaken the East India Company. It was seen that so large an Empire as India ought to be under the direct rule of the Crown. PALMERSTON had introduced a Bill dissolving the Company, and the abolition was carried by the Conservative Ministry. The dual control of Directors and Government had not worked well, and it was obviously to our advantage to make the connection between India and the British Crown as close as possible, in order to consolidate the British Empire. The voice of JOHN STUART MILL was raised against the change, and it must be admitted that his argument carries much weight. He feared that if India were brought under the direct rule of the Crown, the interests of that country might be sucked into the

whirlpool of party politics. A long time passed before his forebodings were verified by facts, but those who observed the dangerous vagaries of Lord RIPPON will be disposed to attach considerable importance to MILL's objection. Old "John Company" is at least entitled to the credit of having discovered for us the proper method of dealing with the Asiatic subject. On another Indian question the Government was, for a moment, in some danger. Lord CANNING, the Governor-General, had issued a proclamation on March 3rd, confiscating all the soil of Oude. His intention was to re-grant the land to all the Talookdars, or native landowners, who submitted, in order that they might hold it under the English Crown. Lord ELLENBOROUGH, Secretary of State for India, an able but impetuous Minister, who had before him only the proclamation without explanation, wrote a strong condemnatory letter to Lord CANNING. Mr. CARDWELL moved a vote of censure founded upon this incident. Lord ELLENBOROUGH, who had not consulted his colleagues, and was undoubtedly in the wrong, resigned, and the vote of censure fell through.

The victory of the Manchester party on the Conspiracy Bill had weakened the hands of Lord PALMERSTON, and so brought the question of extension of the franchise to the front. DISRAELI held that the Conservative party had a prescriptive right to deal with Reform, inasmuch as PITT, to some extent the father of Conservatism, was also the father of Reform; while the Liberals had made two very feeble attempts to deal with the question, and were led by PALMERSTON, the strongest anti-reformer in the House. He saw that Liberal Reform Bills rested on no principle and had no logical basis. There was nothing final about the Reform Bill of 1832. The question was now re-opened, and required a settle-

ment, which should be logical and based on some general principle.

### *Disraeli's Reform Bill.*

The Cabinet, therefore, determined to introduce a Reform Bill. DISRAELI described the scope of the Measure in the House of Commons on February 28th. It had three main objects—to equalise borough and county representation, to introduce personal property as a qualification for a vote, and to establish an educational franchise. The electoral limit for the boroughs was £10, and it was proposed to extend it to the counties. All persons possessing property invested in the funds, in bonds, or in bank stock, producing £10 a year, were also to have a vote. The same privilege was to be extended to any man who had £60 in a savings bank for one year. The educational franchise included ministers of religion, graduates, doctors, the legal profession, and certificated school-masters. The last two franchises were the object of vigorous attack from Mr. BRIGHT, who called them 'fancy franchises': but it should be remembered that they were the invention not of DISRAELI but of Lord JOHN RUSSELL. Lord JOHN, in his Reform Bill of 1854, had proposed to extend the £10 franchise to the three kinds of personal property mentioned above, and to give a vote to any man who had £50 in the savings bank for three years, instead of £60 for one year. In his educational franchise he only included graduates, and in this respect DISRAELI's Bill was a distinct improvement. The principal difference between the two Bills lay in the fact that Lord JOHN proposed a £6 rating franchise for the boroughs and a £10 franchise for the counties, while DISRAELI proposed a £10 franchise for both. The practical distinction is not great, since the £6 rating does not differ very widely from the £10 occupation franchise,

but a question of principle is involved. DISRAELI's Bill asserts the principle that borough and county franchise should be the same, and that, when we had given the vote to the £10 householder in the boroughs, we were bound, logically, to extend it to the county voter. DISRAELI, however, had contented himself with taking the conclusive objection to Lord JOHN RUSSELL's Bill that a time of war is not opportune for Parliamentary Reform. He had waited four years to see whether the Whigs would deal with the question, and, after their failures, he considered himself justified in taking it up. We may admit at once that the Bill was not entirely satisfactory. The £10 franchise, although it had existed for 27 years, being an artificial and not a natural limit, formed an unsuitable basis for our representative system. There is a broad difference between a man who occupies a house and a man who does not, but it is hard to draw a line between the £10 and the £9 householders.

The real difficulty in the way of Reform was the existence, on both sides of the House, of a large party who disliked an extension of the franchise; the consequence being that both Lord JOHN RUSSELL and DISRAELI had to bring forward compromises, which invited criticism and discouraged defence. DISRAELI personally had made up his mind in favour of Household Suffrage at this time. The remarkable feature about his Bill is that it was based on value, not on rating, wherein it differs both from Lord JOHN RUSSELL's Bill of 1852 and from DISRAELI's Bill of 1867. This apparent inconsistency is easily explained. DISRAELI liked the principle of rating, but practical difficulties prevented him from embodying it in this Bill. When introducing it he said, "I confess, myself, that I was always much biased in favour of that idea. It

appears to me if you could make the rate-book the register, you would very much simplify the business of election; but, when you come to examine this matter in detail, . . . you will find that it is involved in difficulties." The difficulties were that, as long as a £10 householder had a vote whilst a £9 householder had not, the irregularities of rating, varying from two-thirds to one-half, and the possible partizanship of the overseer would subject the borough voter to intolerable grievances. As soon as we have Household Suffrage, these difficulties begin to disappear. Once establish the principle of Household Suffrage, and it carries with it the rating basis.

#### *Unprincipled Opposition.*

At the same time, it cannot be denied that the opposition to the Government was extremely unprincipled. The Opposition consisted of three parties. The Manchester school, headed by JOHN BRIGHT, were in favour of Household Suffrage, of voting by ballot, and of charging election expenses on the rates. Lord JOHN RUSSELL and his allies wished to keep the question of Reform in their own hands, and hankered after a rating qualification. Lord PALMERSTON did not intend to carry any Reform Bill at all; if he objected to the Government scheme, he must positively have loathed any more extensive proposals. Yet BRIGHT, PALMERSTON, and RUSSELL united on a resolution declaring "that no readjustment of the franchise will satisfy the House or the country which does not provide for a greater extension of the suffrage." Lord PALMERSTON made a speech, mostly composed of good-natured chaff, the argument being that a Government ought not to dissolve on a Reform Bill. "Is it right, I ask, that the Government should throw the British Constitution to be

scrambled for and discussed upon every hustings?" The Government was defeated on the second reading by 330 to 291, and immediately decided to appeal to the country.

*Mr. Gladstone's Defence of Small Boroughs.*

Amongst those who voted in the minority was Mr. GLADSTONE. He argued during the debate against redistribution, and in favour of the retention of small boroughs, pointing out that no less than six prime ministers had been introduced into Parliament through their means. Such an argument would have been both just and reasonable if urged in 1832, in favour of the old Constitution, but in 1859, when the principle had been established for 27 years that representation and population were necessarily connected, it seems almost ante-diluvian in its antiquity. The speech might well have been delivered by Sir CHARLES WETHERALL or one of the stout old Tories who fought the Reform Bill of 1832 step by step, but such views are strange in a man who was to be the Liberal leader in the House of Commons in six years' time. Exploded Toryism is a curious preparation for a sentimental Radical, unless we can suppose that Mr. GLADSTONE has been able to fertilise his mind with a compost of defunct opinions.

*"A Down-right Tory."*

Any one but Lord PALMERSTON would have been placed in an awkward position by the dissolution of Parliament. He was going to the country on the question of extending the franchise, and he made no attempt to conceal his dislike for Reform. But PALMERSTON was a privileged man, and in home affairs he was not expected to be serious. He had to undergo some mild heckling at Tiverton at the hands of a Radical butcher. He was asked

whether he was in favour of the ballot, of manhood suffrage, of £6 franchise, and so forth. The butcher believed that "the noble lord was a downright Tory, and the best representative the Tories could possibly have." The answer his lordship vouchsafed amid laughter and cries of "no chaff," certainly does not give much information. "His friend had asked him what he thought on many points. In the first place, he was opposed to the ballot. He was against manhood suffrage. (Butcher, "How far will you go with the franchise?") He would give him a straightforward answer. He would not tell him. (Laughter.) He held it was his duty, after the confidence they had reposed in him, to act according to his judgment in Reform." All this is excellent fooling, but has no claim to be considered serious politics.

*A False Charge.*

The Conservatives throughout this election laboured under a suspicion which afterwards proved to be absolutely unfounded. Sardinia and France were engaged in a serious struggle with Austria for the Unity of Italy, and the Italian cause had excited considerable enthusiasm in England. The Conservatives were suspected of having favoured Austria, and this unfounded surmise turned the balance against them in many constituencies. They had, however, made some advance in popular favour, the numbers being 305 to 348.

*Italian Unity—A Liberal City.*

The Liberal party held a meeting in Willis's rooms, and, amidst general surprise, Mr. Bright, the reformer and man of peace, was found sitting side by side with the reactionary and bellicose PALMERSTON, who had so thoroughly beaten him in 1857. A union was patched up, and Lord HARTINGTON was put up to move a direct vote of no con-

fidence. The cause of Italian freedom was the real bond of union. BRIGHT and PALMERSTON, COBDEN and RUSSELL, could find common ground in the cause which they believed the Conservatives to have betrayed. As a matter of fact, Lord MALMESBURY, the Foreign Minister, had pursued a policy that was both wise and safe. He had laboured as long as possible to stop the outbreak of hostilities, because he doubted, with reason, the good faith of NAPOLEON. When war was once declared, he strove to localise it as much as possible, and he put successful pressure on the German States to prevent them from intervening on behalf of Austria. This had, indeed, favoured France. A Blue Book bearing out these facts was ready for publication, but DISRAELI, by some inexplicable error of judgment, caused it to be withheld. The mistake was fatal, and

on June 16th Lord DERBY's Ministry was beaten by 323 to 310. After the defeat, the Blue Book appeared, and produced a most favourable impression. No less than 14 members, including COBDEN, who had supported Lord HARTINGTON's motion, assured Lord MALMESBURY that they would not have voted against the Government if they had known the facts. The editor of the *Times* wrote, "I sincerely believe that if you had published your dispatches a fortnight earlier, they would have had a very important influence on the division." If Lord DERBY could have tided over the vote of censure, he might reasonably have expected, in the divided condition of the Opposition, a lengthened tenure of office. He fell, the victim of an unscrupulous coalition and of an unfortunate mistake.

1859-65.

## LIBERAL MEN AND TORY MEASURES.

### *Ministerial Negotiations.*

**O**N the resignation of Lord DERBY, the QUEEN sent for Lord GRANVILLE, feeling very properly that, as she expressed it, "to make so marked a distinction as is implied in the choice between two statesmen so full of years and honour as Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell, would be a very invidious and unwelcome task." Lord PALMERSTON was willing to serve under Lord GRANVILLE, but Lord JOHN RUSSELL, with characteristic ego-

tism, refused. Lord GRANVILLE thus failed to form a Government, and PALMERSTON, in his 75th year, again became Prime Minister. Lord JOHN took the Foreign Office, and Mr. GLADSTONE the Exchequer, and COBDEN was offered the Board of Trade. COBDEN, who was on his return voyage from America, received tidings from his friends, when he arrived at Liverpool, of three notable events—the defeat of the Tories, his election as member for Rochdale, and PALMERSTON's offer. He refused a seat in the Cabinet, and, when pressed by

PALMERSTON for his reasons, replied, "How can I serve under you when I have called you the worst Minister that England has ever had?" "Many men," said the good-natured PREMIER, "have called me that, who have not your scruples." "Yes. But I meant what I said." The impartial inquirer might reasonably ask why, if such was the opinion of the Manchester men, they were found supporting "the worst possible Minister" against the DERBY Government, especially in regard to the extension of the franchise, on which PALMERSTON was notoriously unsound.

#### *Palmerston and Reform.*

The only result of their action was to postpone all Reform for six years. As the DERBY Ministry had been beaten and forced to dissolve on the Franchise question, the Government was bound not only to introduce a Reform Bill, but to propose more extensive measures than the Bill of 1859. This task Lord PALMERSTON entrusted to Lord JOHN RUSSELL, who, undeterred by the fate which had hitherto attended his efforts, introduced the Government proposals on March 1st. He adopted the £10 occupation franchise proposed by DISRAELI, and, again following DISRAELI and abandoning the position he had taken up in 1852, gave up rating as the basis for the franchise. The arguments he used to justify the change were borrowed from the Conservative leader, and, as they have already been mentioned in detail, need not be recapitulated here. He did, however, introduce one argument of his own. The Courts, he said, had decided that Parliament had intended to give the franchise to the man who paid rent up to the amount of £10. It made no difference how that rent was expended by the landlord, whether the whole rent went into

his pocket, or whether a portion was consumed by repairs. The rating value, on the other hand, was the net value, after deducting repairs and other outgoings, i.e., it represented not the rent paid, but the profit received by the landlord. But, as payment of rent was the qualification for the vote, it naturally follows that the total receipts, and not the ratable profit, was the proper basis for the franchise.

#### *Deficiencies of his Bill.*

So far, the Bill of 1860 was identical with the Bill of 1859, which Lord JOHN had bitterly opposed and solemnly denounced in the name of the people of England. To justify his opposition and his maledictions, he was compelled to introduce some difference. He therefore omitted the "fancy franchises," originally his own invention, and reduced the borough franchise from £10 to £6 occupation. The objections to the Government Bill lie near the surface. Every Reform Bill, if it is to commend itself to the country, must rest on some general principles and form a logical and self-consistent whole. DISRAELI's Bill asserted the principle of the identity of borough and county franchise, and vindicated the claims of personal property and education to the vote. It was based on the £10 franchise which, though not logically defensible, had obtained some acceptance by prescription. Lord JOHN RUSSELL had no logical basis when he proposed to substitute the £6 for the £10 qualification in the boroughs. The effect of the two Bills would have been much the same. RUSSELL's Bill, according to his own calculations, would have added 194,000 voters to the register in the boroughs. What increase would have been produced by the "fancy franchises" of 1859 we cannot say with certainty, but probably it would not have fallen much short of the

"fancy franchises" of 1867. Those franchises, had they been carried, would have produced an increase, we may safely say, on the whole register of 164,500, so that the difference between the Reform Bills of 1859 and 1860, in point of increase in voters, was not more than 30,000 or 40,000. This comparison of the two Bills sufficiently proves the factious nature of the dispute which shipwrecked DISRAELI'S Reform Bill. We have shown that the Government Measure did not bear out or justify the strong declarations of Lord JOHN'S resolution. Although DISRAELI could not but resent bitterly the hollow pretence upon which his Government had been overthrown, he offered no opposition to the second reading of the Bill on May 3rd. Such objections as he took were to the redistribution scheme, which, he declared, tended to "the destruction of spirit and energy in our public life."

#### *The Bill Unopposed, but Withdrawn.*

The Bill was practically unopposed, yet it was plainly doomed. The Ministers did not even take the trouble to keep a House, and the debate was once counted out. On June 11th the Bill was withdrawn. DISRAELI censured the Government for the delay and waste of public time caused by languid debates which ended in nothing, but Lord JOHN, without grief or shame, strangled his own offspring. The withdrawal of the Bill was, undoubtedly, the fault of the Ministry. Mr. BRIGHT declared, with truth, "there is not a man in the House of Commons . . . and there is not a man in the Cabinet who does not know perfectly well that if Lord Palmerston had said on some one evening in the year 1860 that his Government would stand or fall by the Reform Bill, the Bill would have passed through the House without one effective, hostile division." Then

the word was passed round that so long as PALMERSTON lived there would be no Reform. "Why," he said subsequently, at an election meeting, "Why do we not introduce a Reform Bill? Because we are not such geese."

#### *An Unfair Manoeuvre.*

PALMERSTON, in private, was a straightforward and honourable man, but this application of the methods of diplomacy to home affairs reflects no credit on his reputation. The facts speak for themselves. He went to the country in 1859 with the plea that DISRAELI'S Franchise Bill did not go far enough. He beat the Conservatives on these lines, and then introduced a Bill which was practically no more extensive. Then he promptly dropped his Bill, and quietly smothered Reform. All that Liberal action in this matter did for the working classes was to deprive them of some 300,000 votes for six years. The history of Reform during this period is neither long nor important. Mr. LOCKE-KING and Mr. BAINES introduced resolutions on the subject, but obtained little attention and no support.

#### *The Paper Duties.*

The financial measures of the CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER raised an important Constitutional question. He proposed the Repeal of the Excise Duty on Paper. There was, at this date, a deficit of £9,500,000, which would necessitate, among other measures, an increase of 4d. in the Income Tax. It was argued, with some force, that the finances of the country would not allow any remission of taxation. The case was very clearly put by Lord ROBERT CECIL—now Lord SALISBURY—"The question the House had to decide was a question of the balance of taxation—not whether or no there should be a paper tax, but whether at this

time it was preferable to pay the paper duty or another penny of income tax." This feeling was so strong that the proposal was only carried by a majority of nine in a House of 427. The opposition was still more formidable in the House of Lords, which is by custom debarred from altering a money bill, as was admitted on all sides; nor can it constitutionally originate one. But Lord LYNDHURST argued, and his legal erudition gives great weight to the argument, that although the House was not in the habit of originating taxation, yet it both possessed and exercised the right of vetoing Bills which proposed the repeal of taxes. He proved his contention by citing instances varying from 1689 to 1808, in which the House of Lords had rejected bills repealing taxation, without any question being raised as to their constitutional right. He urged that the existing deficit, the threatening attitude of France, and the necessity for national defence made it unwise to sacrifice taxes producing £1,500,000 per annum.\* The Repeal of the Paper Duties was rejected by 193 to 104 votes. The division led to an active and virulent, but rather hollow agitation against the House of Lords, but its technical right to reject a bill for the repeal of taxation was expressly admitted by the Privilege Committee of the House of Commons.

#### *Palmerston's Intrigues.*

PALMERSTON intervened, on July 5th, with three resolutions, which were intended to take the wind out of the sails of the agitators, without attacking the Peers. The substance of them was that the power of taxation rested with the Commons alone; that the right of the Lords to reject had been exercised but not frequently, and was justly

\* This estimate of LYNDHURST proved to be excessive.

regarded with jealousy by the Commons; and that the Commons possessed the right of controlling taxation. The resolutions were passed by 177 to 138, largely owing to Conservative support. PALMERSTON, when asked in private what the resolutions meant, is reported to have said, "We thought it a very good joke for once, but the Lords mustn't do it again." The subject is complicated by a curious passage in Lord MAMESBURY'S memoirs. He says there had been a rumour of a Conservative coalition with PALMERSTON, and the truth was "I was depicted by Lord Derby and Disraeli to tell Lady Palmerston that we meant to throw out the Duty on Paper Bill, for which she thanked us." The probability is that we have here one of those subterranean intrigues of which the astute PREMIER, perhaps in consequence of his experience at the Foreign Office, was so fond. He may have thought a gentle snub to Mr. GLADSTONE would do no harm, for no great love was lost between PALMERSTON and his Chancellor of the Exchequer.

#### *Mr. Gladstone's Neglect of the Colonies.*

Mr. GLADSTONE'S financial capacity, which was admittedly great, was of the same nature as his abilities in other fields. It was a power of exposition rather than action. He could make a persuasive, lucid, and interesting statement about figures, just as he could on any other topic. But he did not understand foreign policy, and he was devoid of Imperial ideas. His neglect of the Colonies was astounding. One instance is his treatment of Sir E. STAFFORD, first Minister of New Zealand, who came to England in 1859 to establish steam communication between New Zealand, England, and Australia. He was well-received by the DERBY Government, which met him more

than half-way, but after its fall he had to negotiate with the new Ministers without effect. At last he interviewed Lord PALMERSTON, who told him, "Well, the fact is we cannot do anything without Mr. Gladstone; it is a money question, and must be settled with him." He had an interview with Mr. GLADSTONE, who stated, in his peculiar style, that until the Dover and Galway Committee reported on a matter absolutely unconnected with Australia, he was not prepared to say he would ask the House of Commons to consider the propriety of entering into the question whether it should or should not establish very large and hitherto unparalleled ocean postal communication. The answer overcame the Colonist, who went straight home to see what he could do for himself. It is conduct like this which has interposed difficulties in the way of Imperial Federation.

#### *Defects in his Finance.*

Mr. GLADSTONE's finance has received much uncritical praise. The immediate effect of his influence on the Budget was to produce in 1860-61 a deficit of no less than £2,558,000. The deficit from 1861 to 1862 was £1,164,000, which showed an entire disregard of his theory that the expenses of a year should be paid out of that year's income, though it should, of course, be remembered that £1,700,000 of the first deficit represents the loss to the revenue incurred under COBDEN'S treaty, whilst £1,000,000 of the second deficit was due to the repeal of the Paper Tax. But this is not the only proof of questionable finance. In 1860-61 there was an error in the estimates of £2,642,000, and in 1861-62 one of £963,000, making a total error on two years of the enormous sum of £3,605,000 on the part of a man who claims to be the greatest financier in England. The fact is

that Mr. GLADSTONE was endeavouring to yoke the large military expenditure of PALMERSTON to the retrenchment of BRITIT, and the attempt to drive such an incongruous pair failed, as all such attempts must fail.

#### *Cobden as a Diplomatist.*

COBDEN'S Commercial Treaty with France was certainly a benefit, on the whole, to the country. At first sight COBDEN and a commercial treaty seem a strange conjunction, because, strictly speaking, such treaties are contrary to the principles of Free Trade. On the Free Trade theory indirect taxes are to be imposed solely for the purpose of revenue, and not in order to encourage or protect home industries. We should treat all nations alike, without favour and without hindrance. On the other hand, a commercial treaty with a given power means that one particular power is favoured above all other nations, and that taxes are remitted or imposed, not for the purposes of revenue, but in order to encourage trade. Moreover, Free Traders teach that Free Trade is a benefit in itself, whilst Protection is a disadvantage, and that England is placed in a very advantageous position as compared with her continental rivals because she has adopted the system, so that she would lose if continental nations were converted to it. It follows that an English Government injures British interests if it attempts to extend among foreign nations the practice of Free Trade. Yet such was the object of COBDEN'S Treaty. The truth probably is that commercial treaties are a subtle form of Protection, and that, so far as they are right, Free Trade is wrong. But there can be no doubt that our trade with France was improved by the Treaty, and the House of Commons was fully justified in carrying an address to the

Crown expressing satisfaction by 282 to 56. Yet it cannot be called the best bargain that might have been made. England had to take more duties off French goods than the EMPEROR would take off English goods, and the answer that was made to this objection—that it is a positive advantage to a country to take duties off imports—only goes to prove that commercial treaties are inconsistent with the Free Trade theory. The Treaty was badly drawn, and Clause 11, relating to the importation of English coal, was extremely unsatisfactory. COBDEN might have got better terms if he had pressed the EMPEROR more closely, for, in 1852, NAPOLEON was ready to admit English silks into France under a duty of 15 per cent., while COBDEN could only obtain a duty of 30 per cent. Of course, as he was not a diplomatist, and as he made no use of the English Embassy in Paris, it could not be expected that he would obtain the best possible terms, but, in the main, the negotiations were not discreditable to him.

#### *Civil War in America.*

Foreign affairs present topics of considerable interest. They fall naturally under three heads—the Civil War in America, the French Alliance, and the Danish Question. The war between North and South broke out in May, 1861. The preponderance of public opinion in England, though rightly hostile to slavery, sided with the South. Mr. BRIGHT's theory that this feeling arose from a love of slavery on the part of the Conservative party and the upper classes is worthy neither of his reputation nor of serious argument. The real motives of English sympathy can be easily explained. There was the natural tendency among Englishmen to take the part of the weaker but bolder side, and the South had distinctly better soldiers than the

North. The cotton famine, too, made the North, which began hostilities, unpopular in Lancashire and the manufacturing districts. If we add to this the contempt and ridicule it was fashionable to pour on the Yankee at that date, we have sufficiently accounted for the drift of English opinion. There was also a set of theorists, represented by Mr. GLADSTONE, who preferred the disintegrating principle of separate nationalities to the loftier and more elaborate problems of a great empire—"Jefferson Davis," said Mr. GLADSTONE, "has made a nation." Such men, accordingly, denounced the North for declining to submit to separation. DISRAELI, following his Imperial instincts, supported the Northern States throughout, though their arbitrary behaviour greatly increased the unpopularity of their cause.

#### *Forcible Seizure of S.S. "Trent."*

On November 8th, 1861, the Federal steamer, *San Jacinto*, stopped the British mail ship *Trent*, and forcibly removed from her Messrs. MASON and SLIDELL, two Confederate Commissioners. Earl RUSSELL promptly demanded their liberation and a suitable apology for the act of aggression. The Guards were sent to Canada, and the British Ambassador was instructed to leave Washington if he did not obtain redress. Mr. SEWARD, the Federal Secretary of State, in a long and ambiguous dispatch of December 26th, gave way. He explained that although it was possible to consider the Commissioners as contraband of war and therefore liable to seizure, and although he would have taken this course if the interests of his country demanded it, yet, under the circumstances, he was not prepared to dispute the point. Earl RUSSELL summed up the situation by suggesting that the United States commanders should be instructed "not to repeat acts

which their Government cannot undertake to justify."

### *The "Alabama."*

Hardly was the *Trent* question settled when the *Alabama* difficulty arose. The vessel was built on the banks of the Mersey, and was principally manned by Englishmen. Owing to the dilatory behaviour of the Government, and the suspicious conduct of an official, it was allowed to sail out of an English port, although every one knew that it had been built for the purpose of destroying Federal commerce. After an exciting career, the *Alabama* was sunk by the *Kearsage* off Cherbourg, in June, 1864, but it had already destroyed some 70 merchant vessels.

### *The French Alliance and National Defence.*

Hostile feeling towards France arose out of the cession by Sardinia of Nice and Savoy. An overwhelming majority of the population voted in favour of union with France, but it created universal dissatisfaction throughout Europe. England had always favoured the cause of Italian freedom, and the English Government had been the first to recognise VICTOR EMMANUEL as King of Italy, so the event gave especial offence to England. PALMERSTON had formerly been the promoter of the Anglo-French Alliance, but after 1859 his suspicions of France were strengthened year by year. The EMPEROR, he said, "was as full of ideas as a warren is full of rabbits." The intriguing and underhand policy of France filled him with apprehension and alarm. "Latterly," he writes, "great pains have been taken to raise throughout France, and especially among the army and navy, hatred of England." "It would be unwise for the Government to shut its eyes to these symptoms." "They (the French)

are eminently vain. They cannot forget or forgive Trafalgar, the Peninsula, or Waterloo." Consequently, he thought it his duty to be on his guard against French hostility. He determined to increase the fleet and to strengthen the fortifications. He also drew up a plan of National defence involving £9,000,000 expenditure in all. Elaborate fortifications were at once begun at Portsmouth as part of the scheme. In fact, he was beginning more and more clearly to see that Germany and not France was the proper ally of England on the continent, for our interests can never seriously clash with those of Germany, whilst we encounter the agents of France all over the world. His schemes met with a good deal of veiled opposition in the Cabinet. He wrote to Mr. GLADSTONE:—"The main question is whether our naval arsenals and some other important points should be defended by fortifications or not, I can hardly imagine two opinions on that question." And, again, "There was for a long time an apathetic blindness on the part of governed and governors as to the defensive means of the country compared with the offensive means of other powers." Sir GEORGE LEWIS, in writing to him, used the following astounding argument:—"It seems to me that our foreign relations are on too vast a scale to render it wise for us to insure systematically against all sides; and, if we do not insure systematically, we do nothing." This opinion, it has been asserted, was shared by PEEL. Of course, any argument against increased expenditure and exertion has at its back human laziness and love of money, but what, we may ask, would be said of a man of business who laid it down as a principle that unless he could insure against all risks, he would insure against none?

*The Danish Question.*

In his treatment of the Danish question, PALMERSTON was not successful. Denmark had attached to itself, by marriage, the two provinces of Schleswig and Holstein, which were occupied by a German population. On these two provinces, Austria and Prussia, moved partly by a desire for territorial aggrandisement, but still more by the idea of German unity which was growing up amongst the scattered German States, had cast greedy eyes. PALMERSTON, by threatening intervention, and by expressing sympathy with Denmark, encouraged the Danes to resist the demands of Austria and Prussia, but, when those Powers invaded Denmark in February, 1864, he left the Danes in the lurch. The following extract from a speech delivered in June, exactly typifies his policy in the matter, violent and impetuous at the outset, feeble and impotent in its conclusion:—“If the Government had reason to expect to see at Copenhagen the horrors of a town taken by assault, the destruction of property, the sacrifice of the lives of peaceful inhabitants, the confiscations which would ensue, and the capture of the Sovereign as a prisoner of war . . . I do not mean to say that . . . the position of this country might not be subject to reconsideration.” In the result, the Danes were crushed and the provinces lost, on the whole to the advantage of Europe. As PALMERSTON subsequently admitted, it was most desirable at this period to strengthen Prussia as against Russia. His policy did no good to the Danes and offended the Germans.

*The Dissolution.—Palmerston and Bright.*

Parliament was dissolved in July, 1865. Mr. BRIGHT bitterly attacked PALMERSTON in his address to his

constituents. “Down with the Whigs” was, in fact, his election cry, although, when the elections were over, he was quite ready to support a Government composed of PALMERSTON’s colleagues. “The Administration, which in 1859 climbed into office under the pretence of its devotion to Parliamentary Reform, has violated its solemn pledges. Its chiefs have purposely betrayed the cause they undertook to defend, and the less eminent members have acquiesced in that betrayal. The Ministry have for six years held office, which, but for promises they made and have broken, they could not have obtained possession of even for a day.” The charge is, in substance, true, but it was the Conservatives who had real cause to be aggrieved. They had done their best to introduce a working Reform Bill, and had been ejected from office on a false pretence, and kept out for six years. Yet, in spite of these injuries, they had forgiven PALMERSTON, because they considered he had, on the whole, maintained the prestige of the country abroad. The Liberals, who were able to appeal both to reformers and anti-reformers, gained a few seats, the numbers being—Liberals 361, and Conservatives 294.

*Mr. Gladstone “Unmuzzled.”*

The defeat of MR. GLADSTONE for Oxford University, by 180 votes, proved the turning point in his career. Up to 1865, no action and no recorded opinion of MR. GLADSTONE separated him in essential principle from the Conservative party. Oxford is and has always been in favour of those principles which are, to use the older and nobler word, distinctively Tory, yet MR. GLADSTONE could say, on July 18th, “I am aware of no cause for the votes which have given a majority against me in the University of Oxford.” Thus, MR. GLADSTONE conceived that he could at this time

claim the support of those who held to Tory principles without being bound by party claims. Now, however, to use his own not very creditable phrase, he stood before the country "unmuzzled." The recreant University has been taught by Commissions and parliamentary interference to regret the day when it rejected the Liberal leader. At the time, Mr. GLADSTONE said "I have loved the University of Oxford with deep and passionate love, and as long as I breathe that attachment will continue." Where are the signs of that deep, abiding affection? It has been shown only in chastisement.

#### *Death of Lord Palmerston.*

PALMERSTON had triumphed, but he was not long to enjoy his victory. Up to 1864, he maintained a gay and jaunty demeanour, apparently unaffected by the approach of years, but in 1865 severe attacks of the gout had greatly enfeebled him, and he had performed his duties as leader of the House with evident and painful exertion. Immediately after the election, he went to his country house in Hertfordshire. On September 13th he wrote a most important letter to Lord JOHN RUSSELL, which may be looked

upon as his last legacy to the English nation. "It is desirable that Germany should be strong in order to control those two ambitious and aggressive Powers, France and Russia. . . . As to Russia, she will, in due time, become a Power almost as great as the Roman Empire. She can become mistress of all Asia, except British India, whenever she chooses to take it." Such were the prophetic words of the great English Statesman. He felt that his life was drawing to its close, but, as he said to his doctor, "when a man's time is up, there is no use repining." His gaiety, assumed for the purpose of reassuring his wife, and his little devices for testing a failing strength were the pathetic incidents of the last weeks of his life. His last extant dispatch was written in the second week of October, concerning the armaments of Canada. On October 18th, he was found dead in his room, an opened Cabinet box on the table and an unfinished dispatch on the desk before him. He was buried in Westminster Abbey on October 27th, and his bitterest political opponents were mourners at his funeral. It may truly be said of him that he never made an enemy and never forgot a friend.



## PART II.—POPULAR GOVERNMENT.

1865-68.

### REFORM: DISRAELI SUCCEEDS WHERE GLADSTONE FAILS.

*Parliament without Palmerston.*

LORD PALMERSTON'S death led to very few changes in the Ministry. Earl RUSSELL naturally succeeded him as Premier, and Lord CLARENCE as naturally took Lord RUSSELL'S place at the Foreign Office, while the appointment of Mr. FORSTER and Mr. GOSCHEN to minor posts was supposed to mark an advance towards a more decided Liberalism. But, though much the same men were in office, an enormous change had taken place in the political situation. England no longer owned a dictator. The good-humoured rule of PALMERSTON was succeeded by long and bitter strife between Mr. GLADSTONE, who now became leader of the House of Commons, and his great Conservative opponent. The question of Reform could no longer be ignored. The constituencies were clearly in favour of a settlement, and the hour seemed to have arrived in which Liberal Ministers might at last fulfil their pledges.

*Liberal Proposals for Reform Dictated by Expediency rather than Principle.*

There can be little doubt that the majority of members, Liberals as well as Conservatives, in their hearts disliked the idea of Reform. Had there been a strong feeling in its favour on the part of the main body of his followers, Lord PALMERSTON could not have played

with the subject with so little pretence of sincerity. As we have seen, the Liberal leaders had, for nearly a quarter of a century, evaded the problem instead of solving it. At the same time they had contrived to give the impression that they were friendly to Reform. Some of their Bills could not even be considered sincere proposals, and those which seemed to show a serious purpose were constructed on no logical principle. Household Suffrage seemed to be altogether beyond the range of practical politics. Mr. FORSTER said at a Reform meeting at Leeds, in 1863, that not fifteen men in the House would vote for it. In the Parliament of 1865, only a small section was really anxious to obtain a thorough-going measure, and even the Radical leaders were afraid of Household Suffrage pure and simple. Many Liberal members regarded a Reform Bill as a painful necessity, and some wished to have none at all. The question of Household Suffrage was brought into the field of practical politics by DISRAELI, not by Liberal leaders. His private convictions were in favour of that principle, as far back as 1859. On this point he was considerably in advance of Mr. GLADSTONE, who wrote to Mr. HORSEFALL, of Manchester, on August 8th, 1866. "I do not agree with the demand either for Manhood or for Household Suffrage." It follows that DISRAELI, of the two, had the better answer to the charge of inconsistency.

*The Reform Bill.*

The Reform Bill introduced by Mr. GLADSTONE in 1866 proposed the reduction of the franchise from £50 to £14 in the counties, and from £10 to £7 in the boroughs. It is surprising that such meagre proposals\* should have excited either enthusiasm or hostility, for they would have involved, on Mr. GLADSTONE'S own calculation, no more sweeping change than the enfranchisement of some 200,000 from the middle-classes, and an equal number of working-men. "Changes," said Mr. GLADSTONE, "that effect sudden and extensive transfer of power, are attended by great temptations to the weakness of human nature; and, however high our opinion may be of the labouring classes, or of any other classes of the community, I do not believe that it would be right to place such a temptation within the reach of any one among them." He decided to deal with the Redistribution of Seats in a separate Bill, introduced in the same session. He admitted the close connexion of the two subjects. "Nothing," he said, "could be more contemptible and base than the conduct of a Government which could give out, with a view of enlisting the generous confidence of its supporters, that it would deal with the subject of Reform, and would stand or fall by its propositions, and which all the while could silently exclude from the scope of their declaration all portions of that question, except only the reduction of the franchise, though among such portions we find one, I mean the distribution of seats, only second in importance to that of the franchise itself."

The opposition to the Bill was very

formidable. The anti-reformers resisted it as strenuously as they would have resisted an extreme measure. Some of the moderate Liberals formed themselves for the purpose of opposition into a party of their own, and came to be called "the Adullamites," from Mr. BRIGHT's comparison of the new combination to the discontented in the cave of Adullam. The leading spirits in "the cave" were Lord GROSVENOR, Lord ELCHO, and Colonel ANSON. Mr. LOWE, too, solemnly denounced the Bill from the Liberal benches. "Uncoerced," he exclaimed, "by any external force, not borne down by any internal calamity, but in the full plethora of our wealth, and the rash surfeit of our too exuberant prosperity, with our own rash and inconsiderate hands we are about to pluck down on our heads the venerable temple of our liberty and our glory. History may tell of other acts as signally disastrous, but of none more wanton, none more disgraceful."

The Conservatives attacked the Bill on several sides. Some of them wished to shelve the whole question. Others, including DISRAELI, based their opposition primarily on the ground that it was a piecemeal reform, and that the extension of the franchise and the redistribution of seats should be dealt with not only in the same session, but in the same Act. Many urged that the Bill was unfair to the counties, both because without an equitable redistribution it would aggravate the grievance of inadequate representation, and because Mr. GLADSTONE, although he proposed £14 as the county qualification, while DISRAELI had proposed £10, left the county

\*LORD RUSSELL, in his "Recollections," avows his own attachment to "the Whig principle" that "the persons endowed with the right of voting for the members of the House of Commons, by whom the whole

state of the country is guided and directed, ought to be persons qualified by property and education for the discharge of so important a trust."

electors to be swamped by the 40s. freeholders in towns, and even granted county votes to borough copyholders and leaseholders. "The Chancellor of the Exchequer," argued Lord SALISBURY, then Lord CRANBORNE, "has produced a measure which we should have expected from him. Throughout the whole of his political career—and he has passed through many phases of opinion, and shown great varieties of character—there is one, if I may so call it, golden link which connects them, and that is his persistent, undying hatred of the rural interest."

*Defeat of the Government.—Third Derby-Disraeli Ministry.*

On the second reading, the Government could only obtain a majority of five in a House of 658. Everyone saw that the fate of the Bill was sealed. In Committee, several amendments were moved on both sides of the House. For a time the Government held its own by narrow majorities. Lord STANLEY, in a speech which has always been regarded as unanswerable, moved to postpone the clause relating to the county franchise until the redistribution scheme was settled, but he was defeated by 287 to 260. The Government fell at last on Lord DUNKELLIN's motion to substitute rating for rental as the basis of the borough qualification, which was carried by 315 to 304. The Bill was abandoned, and the Ministry resigned. Lord DERBY was naturally reluctant to accept office, for his health was failing, and he was tired of attempting to govern with a minority. But no other course was open to him, since he was the only Statesman whom the QUEEN could summon. He was able to form a fairly strong Administration, DISRAELI being again Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the Lower House, Lord CHELMSFORD Chancellor,

Lord STANLEY at the Foreign Office, Lord CARNARVON Colonial Secretary, and Lord CRANBORNE Secretary for India. General PEEL, Sir STAFFORD NORTHCOTE, Mr. GATHORNE-HARDY, and Sir JOHN PAKINGTON were also in the Ministry.

*The Conservative Party and Reform.*

Lord DERBY, on taking office, said that he and his colleagues were entirely unpledged in regard to Reform. "Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to see a very considerable portion of the class now excluded admitted to the franchise." "I reserve to myself the most entire liberty as to whether the present Government should or should not undertake in a future Session to bring in a measure for the amendment of the representation of the people." The Conservative leaders themselves were fully convinced that there was urgent need of a final settlement. DISRAELI had, as he said in 1852, "always been an advocate for an industrial suffrage." It had long been his ambition to restore to the working-classes the political power which they had lost in 1832—"an omission," as he afterwards observed, "perhaps naturally made by a party which, generally speaking, had built up their policy rather upon Liberal opinions than upon popular rights." But many of the Tory members were afraid of a really extensive measure, and no other could bring the controversy to a close. "Seven memorable years," said DISRAELI, when describing the history of his Reform Bill, "elaps'd from 1850 to 1866, when Lord Derby was called again to power, and during these seven years the question of Parliamentary Reform was before the public mind and under the examination of Parliament. During that period of seven years, with the advice—I may say under the instructions—

of my colleagues, I expressed the principles upon which any measure of Parliamentary Reform ought to be established. . . . I had to prepare the mind of the country, and to educate—if it be not arrogant to use such a phrase—to educate our party. I had to prepare the mind of Parliament and of the country on this question of Reform."

*Disraeli's Resolutions.*

In the autumn of 1866, Lord DERBY wrote to DISRAELI that "after grave deliberation" he thought it absolutely necessary to deal with the question of Reform, and to deal with it in no niggard spirit. The Cabinet discussed the matter at several meetings, and eventually determined to ask the House to proceed by way of resolution. It was hoped that, if the House could be induced to define the principles on which Reform should be based, something like general assent might be given to a Government measure. The thirteen resolutions, introduced by DISRAELI on February 11th, 1867, declared, in substance, (1) that the electorate should be increased, (2) by reducing the qualification in both counties and boroughs; (3) that no one class ought to have a predominance; (4) that the occupation franchise should be based on rating; (5) that plurality of votes should be allowed; (6, 7, and 8) that seats should be redistributed, but that no borough should be wholly disfranchised, except for corruption; (9) that a Reform Bill should deal with corruption; (10) that registration in counties and boroughs should be assimilated; (11 and 12) that provision should be made for polling papers and for diminishing the distance between polling stations; and (13) that a Boundary Commission should be appointed. On these resolutions Lord DERBY and DISRAELI wished to base an extensive Reform Bill,

but in deference to the scruples of some of their colleagues they were at first forced to propose a smaller measure, which would have reduced the franchise to £6 rating in boroughs, and to £20 in counties, besides educational and property qualifications. Four corrupt towns were to be disfranchised, and twenty more, with a population under 7,000, were to retain only one member. Fourteen seats were to be given to new boroughs in the Northern and Midland districts, fifteen to the counties, and one to the University of London. DISRAELI calculated that the Bill would add 418,500 electors to the register, and it would, as he said, have "restored the labouring-classes to that place in our Parliamentary system which they forfeited by the Act of 1832." But it satisfied neither the Conservative party nor the country. At a meeting of Conservative members at the Carlton, a general opinion was expressed in favour of a nearer approach to Household Suffrage, and Lord DERBY reverted to his original intentions. The Bill, so hastily introduced, was as speedily withdrawn, and came to be known as "The Ten Minutes Bill." Its withdrawal caused the resignation of three Cabinet Ministers—Lord CARNARVON, Lord CRANBORNE, and General PEEL. The Government abandoned the idea of proceeding by way of resolution, and on March 18th DISRAELI brought in his second Bill.

*Disraeli's Reform Bill.*

The new Bill was based on the principle of household suffrage, i.e. that every man who rented a house should have a vote, whatever the amount of his rent might be. It granted the borough franchise to all who paid either rates for two years, or 20s. in direct taxation. It contained franchises founded upon education, and upon the possession

of money in the Funds or in savings banks, and it allowed dual voting. For the counties it proposed a £15 rating franchise, and its redistribution clauses followed the lines of the "Ten Minutes Bill." The Liberal leaders severely condemned the "checks and balances" in the Bill, and did not conceal their objections to the enfranchisement of the "very poor." "I wish to know," said Mr. GLADSTONE, "what the Government propose to do with respect to the votes of the very poor and dependent persons who are, indeed, householders, and who are nominally ratepaying householders, but who are on the line or fringe between those who pay rates and those who are excused from payment of rates. I wish to know how, practically, the traffic in these votes by the registration agents is to be prevented, for I confess I do not see how that is to be done unless some limit be introduced, similar to that which I myself recently suggested and explained to the House." Mr. BRIGHT declared that he was ready to repeat the speech which he had made in January, 1859:—"I put it to every man—I don't care what his theoretical notions are—whether he believes that throughout the boroughs of the United Kingdom it would be advantageous or beneficial to the constituency as a whole to include some scores in some constituencies, some hundreds in others, a few thousands perhaps in the largest, of a class of which there are, unfortunately, too many among us—namely, the excessively poor, many of them intemperate, some of them profligate, some of them, it may be, only unfortunate, some of them naturally incapable, but all of them in a condition of dependence, such as to give no reasonable expectation that they would be able to resist the many temptations which rich and unscrupulous men would offer them at periods of

election, to give their votes in a manner not only not consistent with their own opinions and consciences, if they have any, but not consistent with the representation of the town or city in which they live." "At this moment," he said, "in all, or nearly all, our boroughs, as many of us know, sometimes to our sorrow, there is a small class which it would be much better for themselves if they were not enfranchised, because they have no independence whatsoever, and it would be much better for the constituency also that they should be excluded, and there is no class so much interested in having that small class excluded as the intelligent and honest working-man. I call this class the residuum, which there is in almost every constituency."

In replying upon the whole debate, DISRAELI appealed to his opponents to forget the struggle of parties in order to arrive at an honourable solution of the Reform question:—"All I can say on the part of my colleagues and myself is that we have no other wish at the present moment than, with the co-operation of the House, to bring the question of Parliamentary Reform to a settlement. I know the Parliamentary incredulity with which many will receive avowals that we are only influenced in the course we are taking by a sense of duty; but I do assure the House, if they need such assurances after what we have gone through, after the sacrifices we have made, after having surrendered our political connection with men whom we more than regarded—I can assure them that no other principle animates us but a conviction that we ought not to desert our posts until this question is settled. Rest assured that it is not for the weal of England that this settlement should be delayed. You may think that the horizon is not disturbed at

the present juncture—you may think that surrounding circumstances may be favourable to dilatory action, some of you may think, in the excitement of the moment, that ambition may be gratified, and that the country may look favourably upon those who prevent the passing of this Bill. Do not believe it. There is a deep responsibility with regard to this question, resting not upon the Government merely, but upon the whole House of Commons. We are prepared, as I think I have shown, to act in all sincerity in this matter. Act with us cordially and candidly; assist us to carry this measure. We will not shrink from deferring to your suggestions so long as they are consistent with the main object of this Bill, which we have never concealed from you, and which is to preserve the representative character of the House of Commons. Act with us, I say, cordially and candidly; you will find on our side complete reciprocity of feeling. Pass the Bill, and then change the Ministry if you like." The second reading was carried without a division.

#### *The Reform Bill in Committee.*

In Committee, DISRAELI resolved to accept, as a rule, such amendments as were approved by the majority of the House. It was no easy task for him to conduct a Bill of primary importance through all its stages without a party majority at his back. His tact was marvellous, and it is surprising that he should so rarely have been betrayed into impatience. On one occasion Mr. GLADSTONE charged the Government with "fraud and dissimulation." He withdrew the words, but remarked that while the Bill appeared to give an extension of the franchise, care was taken that it should not be real. "I must say," answered DISRAELI, "I prefer the original invective of the right

hon. gentleman—the denunciations of Torquemada to the interpretation of Loyola. I prefer to meet a clear charge of fraud and dissimulation rather than be told that we have been guilty of conduct unworthy, in my opinion, of all public men." Mr. J. S. MILL said, at a public meeting, that, if DISRAELI had not deceived the House of Commons, he had at least "encouraged members to deceive themselves," but in the House of Commons he afterwards made the admission—as honourable to himself as to his opponent—that DISRAELI had "completely" acquitted himself of the charge.

The Government agreed to abandon the clauses dealing with educational and property franchises, with voting papers, and with dual voting, and to substitute one for two years' possession. It was also resolved to grant the franchise to lodgers paying £10 rent—a measure which DISRAELI had long favoured, and of which he claimed to be the father. The most important discussion related to the "compound householder." Under Acts of Parliament then in force, small householders were allowed to compound for their rates, and the liability was transferred to the landlord, who was allowed a reduction for the trouble of collection. These householders were said to be considerably more than half the whole number of tenants who paid less than £10 rent. Under the Bill as it stood, they would not obtain votes, though DISRAELI wished to give them facilities to arrange for the direct payment of their rates. Mr. GLADSTONE proposed, as an amendment, to relieve tenants below a given ratable value from all liability to rating, and so to "fix a line for the borough franchise." He and Mr. BRIGHT were both, as Mr. M'CARTHY tells us, "haunted by the fear of carrying the vote too low down in the social scale," but

some of the Liberal members refused to follow them. The dissentients held a meeting in the Tea Room of the House of Commons, and resolved to vote against the amendment. On April 10th Mr. GLADSTONE was defeated by 310 to 289, and soon afterwards he sent a letter to one of his supporters, which was understood to indicate his withdrawal from the leadership of the Liberal party. He declared that the party had not the supposed power "of limiting or directing the action of the Administration," and that, though he still remained at its service, he could not "assume the initiative of amending a measure which could not perhaps be effectually amended except by a reversal of the vote of Friday, the 11th." The "Tea Room party" was violently attacked by Mr. BRIGHT, who said the dissentients were "very small men," and compared them to "a costermonger and a donkey," who would take a week to travel from Birmingham to London, and yet might "bring an express train to total destruction" by running athwart the London and North Western railway. But it is certain that the "Tea Room" members were right, and, in deference to their views, DISRAELI agreed to abolish the compounding system.

#### *Household Suffrage at Last.*

The cause of Household Suffrage was now victorious all along the line. On July 15th, when the Bill passed the third reading, Mr. LOWE denounced the conduct of the Ministry, declaring that the Bill was viewed with "despair" by every Englishman who was not "a slave to the trammels of party." His invective called forth a vigorous rejoinder from DISRAELI—"If we disapprove the Bill which we are recommending the House to accept and sanction to-night, our conduct certainly is objectionable. If we,

from the bottom of our hearts, believe that the measure which we are now requesting you to pass is not, on the whole, the wisest or best that could be passed under the circumstances, I would even admit that our conduct was infamous. . . . I, for my part, do not believe that the country is in danger. I think England is safe in the race of men who inhabit her, that she is safe in something much more precious than her accumulated capital—her accumulated experience. She is safe in her national character, in her fame, in the tradition of a thousand years, and in that glorious future which I believe awaits her."

#### *The Reform Bill in the House of Lords.*

In the House of Lords, where the Conservatives had a working majority, the Bill encountered very little opposition. Lord DERBY said it was at once "large, extensive, and Conservative," and that it would satisfactorily settle a question which would otherwise be a perpetual source of agitation, and an obstruction to all legislation. The second reading was carried without a division. In Committee, the Lords proposed some amendments, e.g., provisions for voting papers, and the extension of the franchise to University residents at Oxford and Cambridge. Both these proposals, together with one limiting the votes of copyholders, were rejected by the House of Commons. The Upper House succeeded, however, in obtaining a "minority member" in constituencies returning more than two representatives, in spite of Mr. BRIGHT's extraordinary statement that "anyone who adopts the principle of the representation of minorities must shake the faith, and lose the confidence of every true friend of reform and of freedom." In the debate on the third reading, Lord DERBY again explained the position of the

Government. "No doubt," he said, "we are making a great experiment, and taking a leap in the dark, but I have the greatest confidence in the sound sense of my fellow-countrymen, and I entertain a strong hope that the extended franchise which we are now conferring upon them will be the means of placing the institutions of this country upon a firmer basis, and that the passing of the measure will tend to increase the loyalty and contentment of a great portion of Her Majesty's subjects."

*Disraeli on Popular Toryism.*

At the Lord Mayor's Banquet on August 13th—two days before the Bill received the Royal assent—DISRAELI vindicated the claims of the Tory party to popular sympathy. "I have seen, in my time, many monopolies terminated; and recently I have seen the termination of the monopoly of Liberalism. Nor are we to be surprised that, when certain persons believed that they had an hereditary right, whenever it was necessary, to renovate the institutions of their country, they should be somewhat displeased that any other persons should presume to interfere with those changes which, I hope in the spirit of true patriotism, they believed the requirements of the State rendered necessary. But I am sure when the hubbub has subsided—when the shrieks and screams which were heard some time ago, and which have already subsided into sobs and sighs, shall be entirely appeased—nothing more terrible will be discovered to have occurred than that the Tory party has resumed its natural functions in the government of the country. For what is the Tory party unless it represents national feeling? If it do not represent national feeling, Toryism is nothing. It does not depend upon hereditary coteries of exclusive

nobles. It does not attempt power by attracting to itself the spurious force which may accidentally arise from advocating cosmopolitan principles or talking cosmopolitan jargon. The Tory party is nothing unless it represent and uphold the institutions of the country. For what are the institutions of the country? They are entirely in theory, and ought to be entirely, as I am glad to see they are likely to be, in practice, the embodiment of the national necessities and the only security for popular privileges. Well, then, I cannot help believing that because my Lord Derby and his colleagues have taken a happy opportunity to enlarge the privileges of the people of England, we have not done anything but strengthen the institutions of this country, the essence of whose force is that they represent the interests and guard the rights of the people."

*Disraeli Premier.*

In February, 1868, the precarious condition of Lord DERBY's health compelled him to resign the Premiership, and the QUEEN sent for DISRAELI. DISRAELI's place at the Exchequer was taken by Mr. WARD HUNT, and Lord CHELMSFORD retired from the Chancellorship, at DISRAELI's request, in order that the party in the Upper House might be strengthened by the debating power of Lord CAIRNS. On March 5th, the new Premier made a statement of his policy. In domestic affairs, he said, "the present Administration will pursue a liberal policy. I mean a truly liberal policy—a policy that will not shrink from any changes which are required by the wants of the age we live in, but will never forget that it is our happy lot to dwell in an ancient and historic country, rich in traditional influences that are the best security for order and liberty, and the most valuable element of our national character and

our national strength." The foreign policy of the Government he called "a policy of peace," not of peace at any price for the mere interests of England, but a policy of peace, from a conviction that such a policy is for the general interests of the world. We do not believe that policy is likely to be secured by selfish isolation, but, on the contrary, we believe it may be secured by sympathy with other countries, not merely in their prosperous fortunes, but even in their anxieties and troubles. If such a policy be continued, I have no doubt, when the occasion may arise—and periodical occasions will arise when the influence of England is necessary to maintain the peace of the world—that influence will not be found inefficient, because it is founded in respect and regard."

*Mr. Gladstone's Irish Church Resolutions.—Fall of the Government.*

DISRAELI might fairly hope to enjoy a long lease of power, for, while the great body of Conservatives was devotedly attached to him, his opponents were divided into several antagonistic and apparently irreconcilable factions. But the question which was to turn the Liberal crowd into an organized party soon presented itself. On March 10th, in a debate on the state of Ireland, Mr. GLADSTONE declared that the hour for the disestablishment of the Irish Church was come. This announcement took everyone by surprise, for in 1865 Mr. GLADSTONE said the question was "remote, and apparently out of all bearing upon the practical politics of the day." His sudden conversion can be understood only by reference to the state of Ireland, and to the peculiar position of English parties. For some years peace and order had been seriously endangered by the Fenian conspiracy, and in 1866 Ireland seemed to be on the brink

of civil war. Lord RUSSELL suspended the *Habeas Corpus Act*,\* and the suspension was renewed by Lord DERBY's Government. But outrages continued, and in 1867 the country was startled by the daring proceedings of the Fenians at Manchester and at Clerkenwell. Mr. GLADSTONE seems to have persuaded himself that the "Church grievance" was the chief cause of Irish difficulties. "When it came to this," he says, "that a great jail in the heart of the metropolis was broken open under circumstances which drew the attention of the English people to the state of Ireland, and when in Manchester policemen were murdered in the execution of their duty, at once the whole country became alive to Irish questions, and the question of the Irish Church revived. It came within the range of practical politics."

All sections of Liberals could unite against the Irish Church. The Roman Catholics demanded disestablishment as an act of justice to themselves. The Protestant Dissenters hoped to create a precedent for English legislation. The extreme Radicals were as ready as ever to join an attack on a great and historical institution. Even the Whigs remembered Lord MELBOURNE's policy, and regarded Irish Church property as legitimate plunder. Mr. GLADSTONE himself was drifting further and further in the direction of Radicalism.† He had lost most of

\* In the debate on the Suspensory Bill, Mr. BRIGHT implored the "two great and trusted leaders," Mr. DISRAELI and Mr. GLADSTONE, to find some other remedy, but Mr. GLADSTONE answered that, while the Government would consider at the proper time any measures for the benefit of Ireland, it was "the single duty of the House that day to strengthen the hands of the Executive in the preservation of law and order."

† A speech by Mr. GRANT DUFF, in October, 1866, contains a curious analysis, from a Liberal standpoint, of Mr. GLAD-

his Tory ideas, and he never had any real sympathy with the Whigs. The Radicals were, therefore, the only section to whom he could turn for personal support. On May 23rd, 1868, he gave notice of three resolutions, declaring (1) that the Irish Church should be disestablished; (2) that new interests should not be created in the meantime; and (3) that the QUEEN should be asked to place her interest in the Church temporalities at the disposal of Parliament. The first resolution was carried by 331 to 270, and the Ministry offered to resign. The QUEEN, however, preferred that DISRAELI should hold on until the opinion of the country could be tested at a General Election, and on July 21st Parliament was dissolved. DISRAELI could state a strong case in favour of his Government. Abroad he could point to greater cordiality and confidence between England and

Foreign Powers, and at home he could claim credit for the final settlement of the question of Reform. In the last Session of Parliament, he had succeeded in carrying several useful measures, including Scotch and Irish Reform Acts, a Registration Act, a Corruption and Bribery Act, the Acquisition of Telegraphs by the Post Office, an Artisans' Dwellings Act, the Abolition of Public Executions, a Poor Relief Amendment Act, and an Act for the Regulation of Railways. But the Liberal party preferred to fight the elections on the single question of the Irish Church, and upon that question, if on no other, they could command a majority. Only 285 Conservatives were returned against 392 Liberals. One of the most interesting features in the General Election was Mr. GLADSTONE's defeat for South-West Lancashire. He was compelled to take refuge in Greenwich.

1868-74.

## PLUNDERING AND BLUNDERING.

*Mr. Gladstone Premier.—Composition of his Cabinet.*

**W**HEN the results of the elections were known, Mr. DISRAELI resigned without meeting Parliament, and Mr. GLADSTONE was asked by the QUEEN to form a

STONE's position at this period:—"Just at this stage of his career, the neophyte leader of the Liberals, he is, indeed, a most curious study. . . . What he hates most, hates with that concentrated malignity which a great living poet has described in his soliloquy in a Spanish cloister, is that thorough-going Liberalism which extends to every department of thought, and in which every part fits into every other. And why does he hate it? Because he has a suspicion that the line

Ministry. He was able to command the services of a remarkably strong body of colleagues, but his distribution of offices was not judicious. No one has ever understood why Mr. LOWE was selected as Chancellor of the Exchequer, or Mr. CARDWELL as Secretary for War, or Mr. BRUCE as Home

on which he has been moving tends to that end. He has a horrible foreboding that—to use his own words—time is on the side of those very politicians who, when he started in public life, were at the opposite pole of the political sphere, against whom all the strength of his youth and of his manhood was directed. . . . He may well murmur at that destiny which may lead him, before he dies, to burn what he adored, and to adore what he burnt."

Secretary. Sir ROUNDELL PALMER at first refused to join the Cabinet because he was unable to support the spoliation of the Irish Church. Sir W. PAGE Wood therefore became Chancellor, with the title of Lord HATHERLEY. Lord CLARENDON was Foreign Secretary, Lord GRANVILLE Secretary for the Colonies, and the Duke of ARGYLL Secretary for India. The appointment which excited most interest was that of Mr. BRIGHT to the Presidency of the Board of Trade. Mr. FORSTER, as Vice-President of the Council, became responsible for the all-important subject of Education. Places were also assigned to Mr. GOSCHEN, Lord HARTINGTON, Mr. CHILDERS, and Mr. LAYARD. Mr. GLADSTONE's power was at its highest pitch. He had gone far enough to secure Radical support, and he had not yet alienated the Whigs. Lord RUSSELL, in his "Recollections," apologises for the confidence which the veteran Liberals at this time reposed in Mr. GLADSTONE:—"I had no reason to suppose that he was less attached than I was to our national honour; that he was less proud than I was of the achievements of our nation by sea and land; that he disliked the extension of our Colonies; or that his measures would tend to reduce the great and glorious Empire, of which he was put in charge, to a manufactory of cotton and cloth, and a market for cheap goods, with an army and navy reduced by paltry savings to a standard of inefficiency." But in 1868 and 1869 people were not thinking of foreign policy. The question of the Irish Church, on which the Election had been fought, absorbed everyone's thoughts. No subject had excited so much angry controversy since the Repeal of the Corn Laws, and the case was argued on both sides with striking ability.

*Mr. Gladstone's Reasons for Disestablishment.*

Mr. GLADSTONE maintained that the question of the Church lay at the root of all Irish questions. He did not pretend that the Irish Church, in its post-Reformation form, was solely responsible for the "national estrangement," but held it to be a "dark fatality" that religious establishments in Ireland had all along been associated with British power, and had therefore been a cause of disunion. He thought it might truly be said that the Establishment was "Papal, but Anti-Irish from 1172 to 1560," and "from 1560 to 1868 it was Anti-Papal and Anti-Irish too." The spirit of the Irish Church had improved, but it remained the token of ascendancy, and, so long as it lived, painful and bitter memories could never die. The Church Establishment, which, "regarded in its theory and in its aim," was "so beautiful and so attractive," was but "an appropriation of public property to certain purposes," which could not be justified unless those purposes were fulfilled. He found in the Appropriation Clause a precedent for Parliamentary interference with Irish Church endowments, and on PRITT's leanings towards the general endowment of religious bodies in Ireland he based an ingenious defence of the violation of the Act of Union by the disendowment of all alike. He denied that the removal of the Established Church in Ireland would endanger the sister Church of England. "Those," he said, "who wish to preserve the Church of England in the position of dignity, of stability, and of ability which she now holds, will do well to found her claims upon the labours she performs, upon the services she renders, and upon the affection she attracts from the masses of the people, including that vast number within her com-

munion, and the no small number of those who are beyond her pale, and those will not do wisely who venture her fortunes on such a crazy argument as that what applies to the Established Church of Ireland, with its handful of adherents, applies with equal force to the Church of England, with its millions upon millions of supporters." He claimed for himself liberty to hold an entirely opposite opinion—"that to relieve the Church from a position which, politically, was odious and dangerous, and which socially was unjust, would be to strengthen her foundations, and give her fair play in the exercise of her great mission." Finally, he insisted that vested interests must be liberally compensated. "The cessation of the Established Church must, in my judgment—I will not merely say might, nor ought,—but in my judgment absolutely must be, subject to the condition, in order to make it an honourable and worthy measure, that every proprietary and every vested right shall receive absolute compensation and satisfaction. And beyond that . . . every disposition should exist to indulge and to conciliate feeling when it can be done, and in every doubtful case to adopt that mode of proceeding which may be most consistent with principles of the largest equity."

#### *The Case for the Defence.*

DISRAELI denied that Mr. GLADSTONE had furnished any justification for so vast and violent a change as Disestablishment. He admitted that the condition of Ireland was not entirely satisfactory, but contended that the Irish people were in a much better position than they were at the beginning of the century. All classes of the population were wealthier and more prosperous, and in the enjoyment of political and social rights which their ancestors had not enjoyed fifty years before. He would not

make light of sentimental grievances, but held that, when in consequence of sentimental grievances we are asked to make very material changes, we ought to proceed with caution. The Church of Ireland was no more a badge of conquest to the Roman Catholics of that country than the Church of England to the Dissenters. The true policy for Ireland was to create and not to destroy, to do justice to the Roman Catholics without attacking the Protestants. All great Statesmen had striven to produce political tranquillity in Ireland, but Mr. GLADSTONE's measure would render it the scene of every hostile passion. Anglicans, as well as Roman Catholics, had feelings which must be regarded, and by ignoring their interest Parliament would call into existence all those inveterate and rancorous feelings which it had sought to eradicate. Disendowment would endanger the principle of property, and the plunder of a Church should be regarded with great jealousy. So far as history could guide him, although it might be a very "liberal" movement to attack an ecclesiastical institution, the consequences had never been favourable to liberty or enlightenment—"the plunder of Churches, which are the property of the people, has never yet produced anything for the people." Church property was given for a specific purpose—the spiritual instruction of the people, and he could not under any circumstances agree that it should be appropriated to a secular purpose. The Liberal leaders should remember that the Irish Church Question involved the great principle that government should not be merely an affair of force, but should recognise its responsibility to the Divine Power. He wished to maintain the Union between Church and State because he considered it a great security for civilisation and religious liberty.

*The Irish Church Act.*

MR. GLADSTONE'S Irish Church Act dissolved all ecclesiastical corporations in Ireland, and abolished all ecclesiastical jurisdictions and laws. The clergy and laity were empowered to meet in synod to make laws for the future government of the Church, including the constitution of a Representative Church Body, in which property retained or subsequently acquired by the Church might be vested. Cathedrals and churches, and school-buildings used with them, were left to the Church, and the Representative Body was given an option of purchasing glebe houses, and a limited quantity of glebe lands, on fairly favourable terms. Incumbents retained their life-interests in the emoluments of their benefices, and obtained facilities for commuting such life-interests by arrangement with the Representative Body. Assistant-curates received a moderate compensation. Private endowments acquired since 1660 were also retained by the Church. The balance was to be at the disposal of Parliament, for the relief, according to the preamble of the Bill, of "unavoidable calamity and suffering" in Ireland. The progress of the Bill through the House of Commons resembled a triumph. The second and third readings were carried by majorities of 118 and 114. Even in the House of Lords the Opposition fought a hopeless battle, and the second reading was carried by 33 votes. Lord SALISBURY voted in the majority, on the ground that popular opinion had unmistakably declared itself on the side of Disestablishment at the General Election. Lord DERBY made his last speech in opposing the second reading. As "an old man, whose official life was entirely closed, whose political life was nearly so, and whose natural life in the course of nature could not be long," he

upheld the principles of national religion and the sacredness of religious endowments, for which he had fought steadfastly and faithfully throughout his public career. The Upper House introduced a number of amendments, but most of them were disagreed to by the Commons, and the Bill became law in substantially the same shape in which it was introduced by Mr. GLADSTONE. History has falsified Mr. GLADSTONE's predictions as to its effects. From year to year we have seen more and more clearly how little Ireland could afford to lose the strongest bulwark of national morality and social order; while to the Irish Church, Disestablishment has been, as Archbishop BERESFORD remarked in 1885, "only an evil, with no compensating effect whatever." The Established Church occupied an intermediate position between Orangemen and Romanists. Its clergy, from their official position, had intercourse with both of the camps into which Ireland is divided; they were not, as a matter of fact, unpopular amongst the Roman Catholics, and they exercised a soothing and conciliatory influence. Mr. GLADSTONE's Act cut away that middle ground of official *status*, and widened the distinction between Protestants and Catholics. Although the established clergy were not ministers of religion to their Catholic parishioners, yet they undertook many social and charitable duties. On the estates of absentee landlords, they occupied the position, and discharged the functions of a squire who lives amongst his tenants. They were not much given to proselytism or religious disputation, but they visited those entrusted to their care in poverty and sickness, and gave them assistance in secular affairs. The Disestablishment of the Irish Church produced much the same effect upon

the poor of Ireland that the destruction of monasteries produced in England. The destitute were, in both cases, suddenly deprived of charitable relief and received no compensation in return.\*

### *The Irish Land Act.*

Mr. GLADSTONE next turned his attention to the land system of Ireland. The principal provisions of the Land Act of 1870 gave rights to tenants of compensation both for disturbance and for improvements, recognised the customary tenant-right of Ulster, and granted Government loans of two-thirds of the purchase money to tenants who wished to buy their holdings. Mr. GLADSTONE denounced the demand for "fair rents":—"I own I have not heard, I do not know, and I cannot conceive what is to be said for the prospective power to reduce excessive rents. In whose interest is it asked? Certainly not in the interest of the landlord. Is it asked in the interest of the tenant? Shall I really be told that it is for the interest of the Irish tenant bidding for a farm, that the law should say to him—'Cast aside all providence and forethought, go into the market and bid what you like, drive out of the field the prudent man who means to fulfil his engagements; bid right above him, and induce the landlord to give you the farm, and, the moment you have got it, come forward, go to the public authority, show that the rent is excessive, and that you cannot pay it, and get it reduced?' He was no less emphatic in regard to "fixity of tenure":—"I ask the House whether any argument

whatever has been made by any English, Scotch, or Irish representative, to show that fixity of tenure, to be applied as a means of securing justice and peace in Ireland, can for a moment abide its trial at the bar of reason. We must endeavour to make reason reach the ears and the minds of the Irish people. Perpetuity of tenure is a phrase that, I flatter myself, is a little going out of the fashion. If I have contributed anything towards disparaging it, I am not sorry." He intended his Bill, as it stood, to be a final settlement of the Land question. "What I hope," he said, "is, that having witnessed the disaster and difficulty which have arisen from long procrastination, we shall resolve in mind and heart by a manful effort to close and seal up for ever, if it may be, this great question which so intimately concerns the welfare and happiness of the people of Ireland. Our desire is, that when it has received the sanction of the Legislature it may become a great gift to Ireland, and may put an end to the grievances and sufferings which have so long accompanied the tenure of land in that country. We found it necessary to propose a Bill which in our judgment should be adequate. And if again I am asked what I hope to effect by this Bill, I certainly hope we shall effect a great change in Ireland; but I hope also—and confidently believe—that this change will be accomplished by gentle means." Mr. GLADSTONE's own measures in later years are a significant commentary on his speeches in 1870.

### *The Home Rule Movement.*

Contemporaneous events showed that neither Mr. GLADSTONE's promises nor his performances were calculated to allay Irish disaffection. The Government was compelled to pass the Peace Preservation Act in 1870, and a further

\* In the ten years from 1860 to 1870, before Mr. GLADSTONE inaugurated his Irish policy, there was in Ireland only one *faufer* in every 100. This was before the attacks on the Church and the Land, and when the population was fully half-a-million more than it is now. In the year 1880 there were in Ireland 549,874 *faufers*, or more than one in every ten.

"Coercion Act" in 1871. In May, 1870, the Home Rule Association was formed at Dublin, "for the purpose of obtaining for Ireland the right of self-government by means of a National Parliament." The Irish Church Act, while it had failed to appease the turbulent element, had exasperated the Protestant minority, and most of those who were present at the meeting were Protestants and Conservatives. The leader of the new party was Mr. ISAAC BUTT, an able lawyer, against whom no charge of violence could be brought, and his lieutenants were moderate men like Mr. P. J. SMYTHE and Mr. MITCHELL-HENRY. In spite of their moderation, "Home Rule" was treated with scant favour by Mr. GLADSTONE at this period. In his speech at Aberdeen, in 1871, he said—"We are told that it is necessary for Ireland to close her relations with the Parliament of this country, and to have a Parliament of her own. Why is Parliament to be broken up? Has Ireland any great grievances? What is it that Ireland has demanded from the Imperial Parliament, and that the Imperial Parliament has refused? It will not do to deal with this matter in vague and shadowy assertions. I have looked in vain for the setting forth of any practical scheme of policy which the Imperial Parliament is not equal to deal with, or which it refuses to deal with, and which is to be brought about by Home Rule. . . . What are the inequalities of England and Ireland? I declare that I know none, except that there are certain taxes still remaining, which are levied over Englishmen and Scotchmen, and which are not levied over Irishmen; and likewise that there are certain purposes for which public money is freely and largely given in Ireland, and for which it is not given in England or Scotland.

That seems to me to be a very feeble case indeed for the argument which has been used, by means of which, as we are told, the fabric of the united Parliament of this country is to be broken. . . . Can any sensible man, can any rational man, suppose at this time of day—in this condition of the world—we are going to disintegrate the great capital institutions of this country for the purpose of making ourselves ridiculous in the sight of all mankind, and crippling any power we possess for bestowing benefits through legislation on the country to which we belong?"

### *The Education Act.*

The most creditable achievement of the Government of 1868 to 1874 was undoubtedly the system of National Education established by Mr. FORSTER. The Act of 1870 provided for the formation of School Boards, elected by cumulative voting, in places where Voluntary Schools did not exist. It was enacted in Committee that the School Boards might arrange for religious instruction, provided no catechisms or other distinctive formularies were taught. In Voluntary Schools full religious teaching might be given, but the continuance of the Government grant was to be dependent on the "conscience clause." The Dissenting Radicals were full of reproaches against the Bill and its author. They had themselves done little or nothing for the education of the people, for most of the Voluntary Schools had been established by the liberality of Churchmen, though the Roman Catholics had taken their full share of the work, and in some cases Protestant Nonconformists, chiefly Wesleyans, had schools of their own. It is hard to understand their grievance, since Government grants are made as freely to Nonconformist schools, where they exist, as to those of

the Church, and the “conscience clause” is an effectual guarantee against oppression. But, as the Dissenters were not prepared to undertake the cost and trouble of founding schools of their own, they wished Church schools to be crushed by the erection, at the national expense, of rival buildings, in which no religious teaching should be allowed. This demand they dignified with the name of “religious liberty.” They could not understand that purely secular education would not be “liberty,” but a cruel wrong to those who hold that all education should be based upon the precepts of religion. But Mr. FORSTER took a broader view of the case, and Radical bigotry was outvoted by a combination of Moderate Liberals and Conservatives. Mr. FORSTER afterwards admitted that he could not have succeeded without Conservative aid. In 1875 he said, “I will give my Conservative friends—my foes who sit opposite to me—I will give them thanks, hearty thanks, for having used no party tactics in opposition to the Education Act of 1870, for if they had done so I do not believe that it would have been possible to pass it.”

*Abolition of Purchase—Mr. Gladstone strains the Royal Prerogative.*

In 1871, Mr. CARDWELL introduced a Bill for the Reform and Re-organisation of the Army, but its provisions were condemned on so many sides that he was compelled to confine its scope to the abolition of purchase. The measure was attractive in name and theory, but the practical objections were strong. It was admitted that the change would be costly. Mr. CARDWELL himself estimated the loss to the country at £8,000,000. Few military critics believed that it would improve the condition of the army. It must be remembered that, under the purchase system,

no one could obtain a commission without passing an examination, and, as the examination was under the control of the Government, it could be made as strict as any Minister could desire. After a man was gazetted as an ensign, his promotion to be lieutenant and captain was regulated by priority on the list, and another examination was required for each grade. Nor could anyone holding a commission be promoted without the recommendation of his commanding officer. The safeguards against the abuse of the system were therefore fairly adequate, and the power of selling commissions made it easier for unfit and incompetent officers to leave the service. The Bill was passed by the House of Commons, though only by a majority of 58; but the House of Lords declined to accept it until Parliament was in possession of the whole plan of the Government. Mr. GLADSTONE then declared that the sanction of Parliament was unnecessary, and obtained a Royal Warrant by which purchase was abolished. This proceeding was condemned by most independent Liberals—notably by Mr. BOUVERIE, Mr. AUBERON HERBERT, and Mr. FAWCETT. Mr. FAWCETT said, “if things had been changed in this House, if the great parties had crossed over, and the right hon. member for Buckinghamshire (Mr. Disraeli) had appealed to royal prerogative, we should have heard—from a quarter which I need not more particularize—eloquent and passionate denunciations about this high-handed act of a Tory Minister; and that denunciation would certainly have been deserved by some who have approved of the Royal Warrant.”

In order to secure an equitable settlement and a fair compensation of vested rights, the House of Lords subsequently passed the Bill, but accompanied it with a

vote of censure on the Government that had thus strained the Royal Prerogative.

### *The Ballot Act.*

The Ballot Act was another of the "heroic" reforms carried by this Administration after a fierce controversy. Its opponents argued, on moral grounds which appealed no less to JOHN STUART MILL than to Lord SHAFTESBURY, that secret voting would diminish the responsibility of the individual elector, and that it would serve the purposes of only the least trustworthy class of persons—those who wished to be protected by law in breaking their promises. On the other hand, it was argued that workmen and others should be protected from the possible tyranny of employers, and that electoral purity would be promoted, because secrecy would make corruption futile. In 1871 the Ballot Bill was carried by the House of Commons, but the Lords, to whom the Bill was sent up at the close of the Session, declined to proceed with it. The Upper House was violently attacked on Radical platforms and in the Radical press, but it could hardly be denied that the Lords were entitled to pause before adopting a measure which the House of Commons had been debating for forty years, and had rejected twenty-eight times. In the following year, the House of Lords recognised that public opinion was on the side of the Government, and accepted the Bill. The Ballot falsified both the hopes of its friends and the fears of its enemies. It did not lower the tone of national morality, as Lord SHAFTESBURY predicted; nor did it restrain corruption. The facts brought to light at the trial of election petitions proved that secrecy left the electors as open to temptation as ever, and in 1883 Mr. GLADSTONE and his colleagues admitted the failure of the Ballot

in this direction by carrying their "Corrupt and Illegal Practices Act."

### *Russia and the Black Sea.*

The foreign policy of the Government was eminently disastrous. In October, 1870, Prince GORTSCHA-KOFF, taking advantage of the Franco-Pruessian war, informed Sir A. BUCHANAN, the English Ambassador at St. Petersburg, that the CZAR intended to abrogate the paragraph of the Treaty of Paris which provided for the neutralisation of the Black Sea. This paragraph was the essence of the Treaty. The Vienna Conference had been broken off, and the Crimean war prolonged for another year, for its sake alone. Sir A. BUCHANAN did not imagine for a moment that the Government would countenance the Russian demand, and expected at once to receive orders to ask for his passports and to leave St. Petersburg. But the Cabinet, instead of taking some decided step, sent Mr. ODO RUSSELL as a special envoy to ask the advice of Count BISMARCK. Mr. RUSSELL told Count BISMARCK that Russia, if she did not abandon the attitude she had taken up, would compel England to go to war, with or without allies. When, however, BISMARCK advised a Conference, Mr. GLADSTONE threw over our envoy and adopted the proposal. The result of the Conference was hardly doubtful, for Mr. GLADSTONE had already convinced himself that Russia was right, and that his own country was wrong. The Conference, when it assembled, could do nothing but yield to Russia. "If," said DISRAELI, "the Conference had been called to vindicate the honour and the rights of England and of Europe, I should have thought it, though a hazardous, at least a bold and loyal course. But why a Conference should be called . . .

merely to register the humiliation of our country passes my understanding."

*The "Alabama" Claims.*

Public indignation was even more strongly aroused by the negotiations of Mr. GLADSTONE and Lord GRANVILLE\* with the United States. In April, 1869, the American Senate rejected the settlement arranged by Lord CLARENDON and Mr. REVERDY JOHNSON. It is impossible to say how far this action was due to the notorious timidity of English Ministers, but any hopes that the Americans may have built upon their weakness were abundantly justified by subsequent events. The Government agreed to the formal appointment of a "Joint High Commission." A Commission sent out with so much pomp was bound, as Lord DERBY pointed out, to conclude a treaty of some sort "under the penalty of making itself ridiculous." Our Commissioners, thus handicapped by the manner of their appointment, were next prevented from displaying any vigour in the course of the discussion, for Lord GRANVILLE was always ready with a telegram advising submission. He directed them to insert at the outset an apology for the escape of the *Alabama*, although, under the Treaty which they were negotiating, arbitration was to decide whether or not England deserved blame. The terms of the reference to the Geneva Tribunal contained *ex post facto* definitions of international duties which were carefully adapted to suit the American case. The claims of Great Britain against the United States, arising out of the Fenian invasion of Canada, were dropped. In short, the limit of English concession was not reached till the

American Government sent in a claim for "indirect damages," which might have involved half the cost of the American war. This preposterous demand was abandoned, and the Geneva arbitrators declared, of their own motion, that it was justified by no principle of international law. But, when the arbitrators awarded £3,250,000 in damages to the United States, the cup of England's humiliation was full. "Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville," wrote Lord RUSSELL, "seem to have been quite unaware that the United Kingdom is a great country, and that its reputation ought to be dear to every British heart." He believed that Mr. GLADSTONE's foreign policy had "tarnished the national honour, injured the national interests, and lowered the national character."

*The Irish University Bill—Defeat of the Government.*

In 1873, Mr. GLADSTONE attempted another Irish Reform. His Irish University Bill proposed to incorporate the rival colleges of Ireland into a new Dublin University. The different colleges might make provision for any or no religious teaching within their walls, but from the University itself all theological subjects were to be banished. In order to prevent controversy, moral philosophy and history were also to be excluded from its *curriculum*. Everyone was pleased with some part or other of the Bill, but no one could admire it as a whole. Educational authorities could not approve of a University which would be prohibited from dealing with the most important departments of human thought. The Protestants feared that it would increase the power of the Roman Catholic priesthood. The Roman Catholics would be satisfied with nothing short of a State-endowed University exclu-

\* Lord GRANVILLE went to the Foreign Office on the death of Lord CLARENDON in 1870.

sively under their own control. The English Dissenters objected to every form of denominational education. The Conservatives saw that the Bill would settle nothing, and unsettle everything, in connection with the Irish Universities. The Bill was rejected by 287 to 284, and the Government resigned. But DISRAELI was tired of governing with a minority, and Mr. GLADSTONE and his colleagues returned to their posts.

#### *Fall of the Government.*

Rarely has a Prime Minister been placed in a more trying position than that occupied by Mr. GLADSTONE during the last year of this Administration. By his destructive legislation he had offended almost every class in the country. He had frightened the Whigs, yet he had not satisfied the Radicals, who thought, as Mr. CHAMBERLAIN put it, that the Ministers only talked the cant of Liberalism and would not do its work. Even the financial policy of the Government

had been unsuccessful. The tax-payers, who remembered Mr. GLADSTONE's strictures on the Income Tax, wondered why it had averaged nearly 4½d., and they were irritated by Mr. LOWE's duplicate budgets and miserable match-tax proposals. Churchmen were indignant at the spoliation of the Church, while the Radical Dissenters thought the process had not been carried far enough. Most men were weary of the hurry and worry of Mr. GLADSTONE's domestic reforms, and all who remembered the rule of PALMERSTON resented the degradation of the country by the failures of the Government abroad. At the beginning of 1874, Mr. GLADSTONE suddenly appealed to the country. He promised to remit the Income Tax, but the constituencies rejected the bribe with scorn. The General Election gave DISRAELI 350 followers in the Lower House, as against 244 Liberals and 58 Home Rulers.

1874-80.

#### LORD BEACONSFIELD.

##### *The Tory Party Triumphant.*

THE Reform Bill of 1867 had at last justified the expectations of its author, and popular Toryism had become a fact instead of a phrase. The Tories had not occupied an equally satisfactory position since the days of PITT and GRENVILLE. They were now, what their history entitled them to be, "the popular political confederation of this

country." The Liberals, on the other hand, seemed hopelessly demoralised, and Mr. GLADSTONE added to their confusion by suddenly announcing that he could not "contemplate any unlimited extension of active service," and might find it necessary to "divest himself of all the responsibilities of leadership at no distant time." In January, 1875, he formally retired, and Lord HARTINGTON took his place at the head of the party.

At first, DISRAELI encountered no serious opposition at all. His measures throughout his Administration were the concrete embodiment of the principles for which he had been fighting during the whole of his political career. In "the fiscal period" he could never have stood as high as PEEL, but PEEL could never have revived, as did DISRAELI, the sympathy which properly exists between the upper and lower classes of English society. DISRAELI had, in truth, always felt more sympathy with the operatives than with the middle-classes. He believed that the great national institutions might safely rely upon popular support, and that the working-classes might look to the Tory party for popular legislation.

#### *Working-Class Legislation.*

His Government will always be memorable for the measures which it carried for the immediate benefit of the working-classes. Some of them are, on the admission of leading Radicals, among the greatest benefits that the people have ever received. In 1874 the Factories (Women and Children) Act, which Mr. MUNDELLA called a "noble measure," while Mr. BAXTER said it would "confer incalculable benefits on the operative class," imposed new limitations on the hours of employment, and made further provision for education. Four years afterwards, the Home Secretary consolidated and amended the Factory Acts in a Bill which caused Lord SHAFTESBURY to remark that "two millions of the people of this country would bless the day when Mr. Cross was invited to become Secretary of State for the Home Department." The "Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act" secured liberty to working-men by placing their combinations beyond the reach of the law of conspiracy, unless their

action would amount to a crime if committed by an individual. One Radical working-man, Mr. GEORGE HOWELL, has called this Act "the charter of their social and industrial freedom," while another, Mr. GEORGE ODGER, said it was "the greatest boon ever granted to the sons of toil." The "Employers and Workmen Act," by abolishing imprisonment for breach of contract, placed labour in a position of legal equality with capital. The savings of the poor were protected by two Friendly Societies Acts for the suppression of fraud, and the Building Societies Acts of 1874 and 1877 aimed at a similar object.

#### *Sanitary Measures.*

DISRAELI had said, in 1872, that the health of the people was the most important question for a Statesman, and, when his views were derided as a "policy of sewage," he replied:—"Well, it may be the 'policy of sewage' to a Liberal member of Parliament. But to one of the labouring multitude of England, who has found fever always to be one of the inmates of his household—who has, year after year, seen stricken down the children of his loins, on whose sympathy and material support he has looked with hope and confidence, it is not a 'policy of sewage,' but a question of life and death." When he came into power, he resolved to put these views into practice. The Artisans' Dwellings Acts of 1875 and 1879 provided for the destruction of houses that were unfit for habitation, and for the erection of suitable buildings in their place. The Sale of Food and Drugs Act imposed heavier penalties for adulteration. The Public Health Act of 1875 increased the efficiency of sanitary authorities. The Commons Act of 1876 established for rural as well as suburban commons a legal presumption in

favour of regulation rather than inclosure, and made encroachments on village greens a public nuisance. The Open Spaces Act of 1877 provided places of recreation for the inhabitants of London.

### *Other Social Legislation.*

Among other Bills passed by the BEACONSFIELD Cabinet in the interests of the working-classes may be mentioned an Act to abolish the hateful "truck system" in the hosiery trade, the Elementary Education Act, and the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1876, and the Weights and Measures Act of 1878. In 1879, Mr. MACDONALD, the Radical miners' member, said:—"As to the policy of the Government, I am not one with strongly hostile views to them. I thought we had had enough of Whig rule when I entered Parliament, and I thought we ought to give a fair trial to the new party in power. We have gained more from Conservatives in matters affecting the working men than the Liberals would ever dare have granted."

### *The Redress of Agricultural Grievances.*

The domestic policy of the Government included, as might have been expected, the redress of some of the grievances of agriculturists. The burden of local taxation was relieved to the extent of £2,000,000 a year, by the transfer to the Imperial Exchequer of the cost of County Prisons, and of half the cost of the County Police and Lunatic Asylums. Lord SANDON carried, in spite of violent opposition from the Liberals, an Act for the suppression of Cattle Disease. The Agricultural Holdings Act of 1875 first recognised tenants' claims to compensation for improvement, and DISRAELI declared himself ready to accept a compulsory clause if it should prove to be necessary. The question of the County Franchise was raised by

Mr. TREVELYAN in May, 1874. DISRAELI did not object to the principle of the equalisation of borough and county qualifications. "As regards the classes," he said, "which the hon. gentleman by his Bill seeks to invest with the franchise, I have no hesitation in giving my opinion. I have no doubt that the rated householder in the county is just as competent to exercise the franchise with advantage to the country as the rated householder in the towns. I have not the slightest doubt whatever that he possesses all those virtues which generally characterise the British people, and I have as little doubt that if he possessed the franchise he would exercise it with the same prudence and the same benefit to the community as the rated householder in the town." But so large an increase in the electorate would involve a general redistribution of seats, and the country was not ripe for a general reconstruction of the electoral system. "We should not now, in a most unnecessary manner, disturb the political conscience of the country, when, as I think, the public mind is not intent upon change, and when the very class on whose position the right hon. gentleman has most rested his argument and his appeal—viz., agricultural labourers—are only a portion, and not the largest portion, of those interested in this great question. The mind of that class is occupied, not with political change, but rather with an elevation of their social condition; and when the disposition of the country is favourable, beyond any preceding time that I can recall, to a successful consideration of the social wants of the great body of the people, I think it would be most unwise to encourage this fever for organic change." From the division on Mr. TREVELYAN's motion, most of the leading Liberals, including Mr. GLADSTONE, Lord

HARTINGTON, and Sir WILLIAM HARcourt, were absent. Hitherto, Mr. GLADSTONE had voted and spoken against the extension of the franchise, and it was not until 1877 that the Liberal party, as a whole, declared in its favour.

*Disraeli's Foreign Policy.*

In foreign affairs DISRAELI made it his object to recover the thread of British policy which Mr. GLADSTONE'S Government had lost. He felt that it was his duty to restore England to her rightful position among the nations of the world, and he welcomed any opportunity of asserting the Imperial claims of his country. One remarkable proof of his sagacity was his purchase of the KHEDIVE'S shares in the Suez Canal. Mr. GLADSTONE condemned the purchase at the time as "a financial operation of a most ridiculous description," yet in ten years the shares had risen in value from £4,076,000 to over £10,000,000. But DISRAELI did not regard the transaction merely as an investment, for it was intended to assert the determination of England to maintain the route to India. The Royal Titles Act, which gave the QUEEN the title of "Empress of India," was also due to his imaginative genius. It was an appropriate compliment to the Indian subjects of the QUEEN, and an emphatic declaration of England's interest in India. It is hard to understand how it aroused vehement opposition, or how Liberal critics, in face of the contrary wording of the Act, could describe it as substituting the title of Empress for that of Queen. DISRAELI showed that the natives of India regarded the Bill with the utmost favour. "Let the people of India" he said, "feel that there is a sympathetic chord between us and them, and do not let Europe suppose for a moment that there are any in this House who are

not deeply conscious of the importance of our Indian Empire."

*The Eastern Question Re-opened.*

Little more than a year after the accession of the Government to power, trouble in Eastern Europe began. In the summer of 1875, an insurrection broke out in Herzegovina, and soon spread into Bosnia. The discontent of the Christian inhabitants of Turkey caused several remonstrances to be addressed to the PORTE by European Powers. The "Andrassy Note," for which the Chancellors of Austria, Germany, and Russia were responsible, received the "general support" of England, although the Government complained, with reason, that our advice had not been asked before the Note was drawn up. The PORTE accepted most of the Reforms which it suggested, but had neither the will nor the power to carry them into effect. The three Imperial Chancellors next proposed to present the Berlin Memorandum, which insisted on an armistice of two months between the PORTE and the rebels, in order that terms of peace might be negotiated on stated conditions. It was impossible for Lord DERBY to sanction this Memorandum; for England, in spite of her achievements in the Crimea, would have been placed in subordination to the other Powers, and our Government knew that, as Turkey was unable to execute sudden and sweeping Reforms, there was great danger of creating a pretext for Russian aggression.

Meanwhile, an insurrection had taken place in Bulgaria, and the vigour and severity with which it was suppressed by the irregular troops of Turkey furnished the Radicals with a plausible cry. For several months Radical orators devoted their energies to violent attacks upon the Government.

Every sensational story of murder or outrage that appeared in a newspaper was greedily swallowed. It was said that more than 30,000 Bulgarians had been killed, and that 10,000 had been imprisoned. Accounts were circulated of the sale of hundreds of Christian girls; of cart-loads of heads being paraded through the streets; and of the infliction of all sorts of horrible tortures. Sometimes DISRAELI was charged with culpable ignorance of what occurred; sometimes it was said that, although he had known everything, he had done nothing. Mr. GLADSTONE published a pamphlet under the title "Bulgarian Horrors, and the Question of the East," in which he urged that the Turkish officials must be turned out of the Christian provinces "bag and baggage." In speech after speech he assailed the Government with a blind disregard of national interests, and without a thought of our delicate negotiations with foreign Powers. As a matter of fact, from the moment when the transactions in Bulgaria occurred, the Government had been in constant communication with Sir H. ELLIOTT, our Ambassador at Constantinople, who reported that the stories of tortures and of the sale of women were fabrications, although, undoubtedly, many Bulgarians had been imprisoned and still more had been killed. But there had, also, certainly been many offences on the part of the irregular troops, such as commonly accompany oriental warfare. Our Ambassador had done all he could, by repeated protests to the Turkish Government, to stay the cruelty of the troops, but, as Lord SALISBURY said, "It has always been the case, where any Government has been compelled to employ other than their own drilled forces in suppressing a rebellion, that such acts as these have unfortunately been committed."

### *The Russo-Turkish War.*

Servia and Montenegro next declared war against Turkey, and the Servians, who were speedily crushed, asked for the mediation of the great Powers. Accordingly, a Conference was held at Constantinople, at which Lord SALISBURY, then Secretary for India, represented England. He suggested, as a basis for peace (1) that in Servia and Montenegro the *status quo* should be restored, (2) that local self-government should be conceded to Bosnia and Herzegovina, (3) that guarantees should be given for the good government of Bulgaria. Several other schemes were discussed, but eventually the English proposals were adopted by the plenipotentiaries. The Turks, however, declined to agree to them. The atrocity-mongers had done their work only too well. "We were told," said Lord SALISBURY, "that we were a Government which no longer represented the people of England; that those who did represent the people of England had declared that the Turks must be turned out bag and baggage, and that it was of no use for the Turks to follow our advice because they were already doomed. That was the effect of the Bulgarian agitation upon our power over their counsels." One of the Turkish diplomats is said to have defended their obstinacy with the remark, "Europe desires to smother us. We came by the sword, and may as well die by it."

The Conference was dissolved, and more fruitless negotiations took place. Lord BEACONSFIELD\* had to play an extremely difficult part. He wished to press necessary reforms on Turkey, but he knew the danger of resorting to

\* DISRAELI had been created Earl of BEACONSFIELD in August, 1876, and Sir STAFFORD NORTHCOOTE then assumed the leadership of the House of Commons.

force. "Every employment of force in the East," says M. Guizot, "turns to the profit of Russia; first, because Russia always appears on that scene with the greatest amount of strength, and next, because every employment of force, every great shock, opens chances impossible to foresee, and which Russia more than any other Power is in condition to take advantage of." Russia was eager to find a pretext for war, and Lord BEACONSFIELD was as eager to frustrate her ambitious designs. But, in face of dissensions in the Cabinet and of the unpatriotic attitude of Mr. GLADSTONE and his followers, it was impossible to preserve peace. On April 24th, 1877, Russia declared war against Turkey, in spite of the protest of our Government. Lord DERBY pointed out that the action of Russia was in direct contravention of the Treaty of Paris, as confirmed in 1871, by which Russia and the other Powers engaged, each on its own part, to respect the independence and the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire. The unjustifiable character of the war was the key-note of Lord BEACONSFIELD's policy, and our Ambassador told Prince GORTSCHAKOFF that any Treaty concluded between Russia and the PORTE affecting the Treaties of 1856 and 1871 would not be valid without the assent of the other Powers.

By the close of the year the Turkish armies were crushed, and the Russians were advancing through Bulgaria towards Constantinople. Lord BEACONSFIELD saw the necessity for strong measures. On January 24th, 1878, the British fleet was ordered to Constantinople, but Lord CARNARVON resigned, and Lord DERBY threatened to follow his example, and the order was countermanded. The Government next asked for a Vote of Credit for £6,000,000,

which was strenuously resisted by Mr. GLADSTONE, but carried on February 7th by 295 to 96. On the same day, the fleet was again ordered to Constantinople. On March 3rd the famous Treaty of San Stephano was signed by the representatives of Russia and Turkey. Its clauses were framed almost entirely in the interests of Russia, without regard to the wishes and policy of the rest of the European Powers. The navigation of the Bosphorus was declared to be free to all merchant vessels, alike in peace and in war. Batoum, Ardahan, Kars, and the adjoining districts were to remain in the possession of Russia. A war indemnity of £47,500,000 was to be paid by Turkey, and Russia was to receive the Dobrudja in order to exchange it for Bessarabia. An increase of territory and complete independence was to be granted to Servia and Montenegro. The Bulgarians were to form a Principality under an elected Prince, and their territory was to receive a large extension, including a sea-port on the Ægean, but Russia was to occupy Bulgaria for two years with 50,000 troops. Roumania was left to make a separate Treaty with Turkey, including a demand for another indemnity. The Treaty, said Lord STRATFORD DE REDCLIFFE, was "Muscovite not European, excessive not considerate, ruinous not corrective, surer to gall than to heal, inconsistent with previous bearings, in short, rather an ambitious spoliation in the guise of peace than a peaceful rescue from evils pressing, in fact and in prospect, on national welfare in earth's most civilised quarters. The preliminaries of San Stephano, to be tolerated at all, must, of necessity, undergo a close inspection and a remedial curtailment."

The Treaty was, in short, a complete exposure of the hypocrisy

of the Czar, who had "pledged his sacred word of honour" that Russia had "no ambitious purpose," and of the Anti-English policy of Mr. GLADSTONE and the other friends of Russia in this country. The Great Powers resolved to summon a European Congress, and the English Government insisted that the whole Treaty should be submitted to that Congress. To this course Russia raised a series of objections. Lord BEACONSFIELD then called out the Reserves. Lord DERBY resigned, but his resignation was more than compensated for by the appointment of Lord SALISBURY to the Foreign Office. On April 17th, the Government ordered Indian troops to Malta. The Liberals, although they knew that the issues of peace and war were hanging in the balance, saw fit to propose a vote of censure on the Government for employing Indian troops away from India, but the motion was rejected by 347 to 226. Eventually, Lord BEACONSFIELD's statesmanship achieved its object. The German Government invited representatives of the Powers to a Congress at Berlin to discuss the whole of the Treaty, and this invitation was accepted both by Russia and by England.

#### *The Berlin Congress.*

On June 13th the Congress met at Berlin under the presidency of Prince BISMARCK, Lord BEACONSFIELD and Lord SALISBURY representing England. Before it assembled, the Government made an arrangement with Russia agreeing to the annexation of Batoum and Kars, and of Bessarabia, and stipulating for the division of Bulgaria into two provinces. As a counter-poise to the aggrandisement of Russia, a Convention was concluded with Turkey, under which Great Britain was to acquire Cyprus, and the PORTE was to

carry out needful reforms. In return for these concessions, Great Britain was to guarantee the integrity of the Asiatic dominions of Turkey. The Congress effected many material alterations in the provisions of the Treaty of San Stephano. Bulgaria was confined to the North of the Balkans, and Eastern Roumelia was given a separate constitution. The English Government fully recognised the importance of establishing a large autonomous Principality in Turkey, but that course was impracticable while Bulgaria was in the hands of Russia. The union of Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia under Russian auspices would virtually have placed the European dominions of Turkey under Russian control, and Lord BEACONSFIELD insisted that the power of Turkey should not be destroyed before some other bulwark against Russian aggression could be found. "Turkey in Europe," said Prince BISMARCK, "once more exists." Thrace, Macedonia, and the littoral of the Ægean were restored to the SULTAN, and the proposed concessions to Servia and Montenegro were limited. As an additional barrier against Russia, Bosnia and Herzegovina were placed under the administration of Austria. The Congress recommended, but did not enforce, concessions to Greece. Lord BEACONSFIELD did not believe that the time had come for a great extension of Greek power, and advised Greece to "learn to be patient." In Asia, Russia surrendered Bayazid and the Valley of Alaskerd. On July 13th, the Treaty of Berlin was signed.

#### *"Peace with Honour."*

The return of Lord BEACONSFIELD and Lord SALISBURY from Berlin was a popular ovation. On landing at Dover, and when addressing the crowd from the win-

dows of the Foreign Office, the PRIME MINISTER used the same memorable phrase—"We have brought you back peace, but a peace, I hope, with honour, which may satisfy our Sovereign, and tend to the welfare of the country." At the banquet given in honour of himself and his colleague on July 27th, he vindicated the Anglo-Turkish Convention against the diatribes of the Opposition leaders. He showed that, far from increasing our responsibilities, it really diminished them. Our interests required that we should ultimately prevent the occupation of Asia Minor by Russia, and, if we wished to prevent war, it was well to take a step beforehand which indicated what the policy of England would be. "One of the results," he remarked, "of my attending the Congress of Berlin has been to prove—what I always suspected—to be an absolute fact, that neither the Crimean war nor this horrible devastating war which has just terminated would have taken place if England had spoken with the necessary firmness." "We thought the time had come when we should take steps which would produce some order out of the anarchy and chaos that had so long prevailed. . . . I hold we have laid the foundation of a state of affairs which may open a new continent to the civilisation of Europe, and that the welfare of the world and the wealth of the world may be increased by availing ourselves of that tranquillity and order which the more intimate connection of England with that country will now produce." In answer to those who described the Convention as an "insane Convention," he "would put this question to an English jury:—Which do you believe more likely to enter into an 'insane Convention,'—a body of English gentlemen honoured by the favour

of their Sovereign and the confidence of their fellow-subjects, managing your affairs for five years, I hope with prudence and not altogether without success, or a sophistical rhetorician inebriated with the exuberance of his own verbosity, and gifted with an egotistical imagination that can, at all times, command an interminable and inconsistent series of arguments to malign an opponent and to glorify himself?"

### *The Afghan War.*

The Afghan difficulty was a legacy of woe from the GLADSTONE Government. Afghanistan, which VON MOLTKE calls the "*glacis* of the fortress of Hindostan," has long been the battle-ground of English and Russian diplomats. The AMEER is forced by the necessities of his position to side with one or other of the rival Powers, and the weakness of the GLADSTONE Government, after the Conquest of Khiva by Russia in 1873, had caused SHERE ALI to renounce the alliance of England. In 1878, while war between England and Russia might have been proclaimed at any moment, he received the Russian envoy with marked cordiality, and allowed him to stay at his court. In December, Lord NAPIER of MAGDALA telegraphed:—"Afghanistan, if in the hands of a hostile Power, may at any time deal a fatal blow to our Empire. . . . Our frontier is weak: an advanced position is necessary for our safety." The English Government demanded that the AMEER should also receive an English envoy, and informed him that a refusal would be interpreted as an act of hostility. Lord SALISBURY said "It was not the military invasion of India, but the diplomatic invasion of Afghanistan that we had to guard against. We had to take measures to prevent Russia working in the East with Afghan-

istan as her base, as she had worked in Europe with Bulgaria and Bosnia. To prevent such an evil, remonstrances to St. Petersburg were useless. It could only be done by English agents on the spot, who might watch the unauthorised diplomacy of Russia."

The AMEER returned no answer to the communication of our Government, and directed his officers to forbid our Envoy, Sir NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN, to proceed. War followed, and in six months our troops occupied Afghanistan. In May, 1879, by the Treaty of Gandamak, YAKOOB KHAN, the son and successor of SHERE ALI, agreed to receive an envoy in Cabul, and to surrender the Kuram, Pishin and Sibi valleys, in return for £60,000 a year, while England undertook the guidance of his foreign policy and the defence of his country against aggression. Sir LOUIS CAVIGNARI was sent as envoy to Cabul, but his murder in September forced England to again invade Afghanistan.

#### *The Zulu War.*

The Ministers fully accepted their responsibility for the Afghan war, and were content to base their defence on the interests of our Indian Empire, and the approval of the great majority of Anglo-Indian authorities. For the war with the Zulus in 1879, which was due to the hasty action of Sir BARTLE FRERE, the Government was clearly not responsible. The Opposition, however, held that the Government was to blame for not recalling Sir BARTLE FRERE from South Africa, and Sir C. DILKE moved a vote of censure, which was rejected by 306 to 246. Sir BARTLE FRERE had been selected by the Government mainly in order to carry out a Confederation of the South African Colonies similar to that which Lord CARNARVON had already carried out in

North America, and he could not have been recalled without detriment to our Colonial interests. But the Opposition did not scruple to make party capital out of both the Afghan and the Zulu wars. Lord BEACONSFIELD was represented as an inhuman monster who loved war partly for its own sake, and partly as a means of diverting public attention from domestic affairs. Such arguments could not carry conviction to the minds of those who had followed the history of his foreign policy, but with many of the less-informed electors they undoubtedly had some weight.

#### *Conservative Finance.*

The financial policy of the Government was assailed with equal pertinacity and equal injustice. Liberal speakers pointed to the fact that the average expenditure of 1874-80 had exceeded that of 1868-74 by nearly £8,000,000, and omitted to explain that considerably more than half of the apparent excess imposed no new burden upon the country. Besides devoting £2,000,000, as we have seen, to the relief of county rates, the Government had spent £2,000,000 in converting the National Debt into terminable annuities, and nearly £650,000 in loans to local bodies upon profitable terms. The neglect of the National Defences by the GLADSTONE Administration had also rendered necessary an extra expenditure of £3,000,000 upon the Army and Navy. The taxes imposed by Lord BEACONSFIELD'S Government were, after all, a very moderate insurance against the dangers which England had been forced to face. "After a period of almost unexampled commercial depression," said Sir STAFFORD NORTHCOTE in 1880, "and of grave agricultural losses, during which we have had to incur the expense of defending our interests in three different

quarters of the globe, the taxation of this country is lighter than in almost any year previous to the accession of the present Government to power, while the real amount of the National Debt stands now at £18,000,000 below the sum at which we found it. The Crimean war added upwards of £40,000,000 to the Debt and left the tax-payer subject to an income tax of 1s. 4d. in the pound, besides heavy imposts on the necessities of life. The war into which, but for a decided policy, we should have been drawn, would have been even more burdensome both to the taxpayer of the day and to our posterity."

*The Pilgrimage of Passion.*

Mr. GLADSTONE made his famous "pilgrimage of passion" to Midlothian in the winter of 1879, and both then and in the spring of 1880 he delivered a series of philippics against the whole policy of Lord BEACONSFIELD. Not content with attacking Sir STAFFORD NORTHCOTE'S management of finance, he declared that the Government had "prolonged and aggravated the public distress." The Afghan war he described as "full of mischief, if not of positive danger, to India." His fiercest invective was reserved for Lord BEACONSFIELD's policy in the East, which, he said, "had gravely compromised the faith and honour of the country." He even argued that it had "augmented the power and influence of the Russian Empire." He included the Austrian Empire in his sweeping condemnation. "There is not a spot upon the map of the whole world," he exclaimed, "where you can lay your finger and say, 'There Austria did good.'"

*Lord Beaconsfield's Irish Policy.*

The dissolution of Parliament was announced on March 8th, 1880, and Lord BEACONSFIELD'S Election

Manifesto took the form of a letter to the Duke of MARLBOROUGH, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. The Ministers had been able, while mitigating the severity of Mr. GLADSTONE'S Coercion Acts, to maintain peace and order in Ireland. There was at the close of their administration, as Mr. GLADSTONE subsequently admitted, "an absence of crime and outrage, and a general sense of comfort and satisfaction, such as was unknown in the previous history of the country." Nevertheless, Lord BEACONSFIELD saw that Ireland was distracted by "a danger, in its ultimate results scarcely less disastrous than pestilence and famine. . . . A portion of its population is attempting to sever the Constitutional tie which unites it to Great Britain in that bond which has favoured the power and prosperity of both." He warned the electors, in prophetic words, against trusting the Liberal leaders to deal with the Home Rule movement.

*The General Election of 1880.*

Lord BEACONSFIELD'S Manifesto went on to say:—"The immediate dissolution of Parliament will afford an opportunity to the nation to decide upon a course which will materially influence its future fortunes and shape its destiny. . . . Rarely in this century has there been an occasion more critical. The power of England and the peace of Europe will largely depend on the verdict of the country. Her Majesty's present Ministers have hitherto been enabled to secure that peace, so necessary to the welfare of all civilised countries, and so peculiarly the interest of our own. But this ineffable blessing cannot be obtained by the passive principle of non-interference. Peace rests on the presence, not to say on the ascendancy, of England in the Councils of

Europe. Even at this moment, the doubt, supposed to be inseparable from popular election, if it does not diminish, certainly arrests her influence, and is a main reason for not delaying an appeal to the national voice. Whatever may be its consequences to Her MAJESTY's present advisers, may it return to Westminster a Parliament not unworthy of the power of England, and resolved to maintain it!"

It is no exaggeration to say that the allies and friends of England throughout the civilised world expected and desired the continuance of Lord BEACONSFIELD in power. But, although less than two years had passed since he brought back "peace with honour" from the Congress of Berlin, the tide of public opinion had already turned. The General Election of 1880 sent only 237 Conservatives to West-

minster, as against 353 Liberals and 62 Home Rulers. Several explanations of the disaster were given. Some alleged the improved organisation of the Radicals, others the skill with which Mr. GLADSTONE had attracted to himself all the discontented sections of the community. Probably, the succession of bad seasons, which the Liberals, with more skill than logic, pressed into their service as an argument, operated as strongly against the Government as any other cause. It must also be confessed that many of the electors were influenced by the declamations of Mr. GLADSTONE. But, while the historian will admit that in 1880 the electors were deluded, he will also add that the penalties they paid during the years that followed more than sufficed to expiate their error.

1880-85.

## THE REIGN OF CONFUSION.

*Mr. Gladstone again Premier.—His Apology to Austria.*

M R. GLADSTONE returned to office at the head of overwhelming forces, yet the dispassionate observer might have marked sources of weakness in his position. He undoubtedly entered political life with the resolve to maintain a high moral standard, but he had for so many years been describing the not over creditable manœuvres of partisan strife in language which would be hypocritical if applied to the achievements of a PITT or a BISMARCK,

that his moral sense had lost all keenness of perception and his political conscience had become deadened. He was for ever proving that, as the present editor of the *Daily News* remarked, "what looked uncommonly like expediency was really due to deference to the noblest and most generous sentiment." He had worked day by day and week by week to counteract the policy of Lord BEACONSFIELD. He had passed upon it a condemnation as sweeping and as minute as an ecclesiastical censure, and had come into office as the antithesis or negation of the Conservative leader. That Lord

BEACONSFIELD invariably erred morally and politically, he took as his rule of life. As his predecessor had generally been right in his policy and accurate in his forecasts, Mr. GLADSTONE, in adopting this course, laid up for his Government a store of adversity. Whatever the cause, it is certain that, though other administrations may have been more disastrous, none has ever been so persistently and monotonously unsuccessful. We may justly say of it, to paraphrase Mr. GLADSTONE's own language, "There is not a spot on the map of the world to which you can point and say 'here the Government of 1880 did good.'" The new Ministers failed in South Africa, failed in Ireland, failed in India. They insulted and offended the Colonies. They found Ireland peaceful and contented, and left it in misery and disorder. In Egypt, to failure they added indelible disgrace. The historian can lend but little interest to the gloomy and unbroken catalogue of their misfortunes. He can trace no principles in their policy, for they had none. He can see no plan in their operations, for they never knew one day what they would do the next. In the new Cabinet Mr. GLADSTONE was Premier and Chancellor of the Exchequer. Lord HARTINGTON, Mr. CHILDERS, Sir W. HARCOURT, Lord GRANVILLE, and Lord KIMBERLEY were Secretaries respectively for India, war, home affairs, foreign affairs, and the colonies. Mr. GLADSTONE began with an apology to Austria for language used when in a position "of greater freedom and less responsibility." "I will at once express my serious concern . . . that I should have been led . . . to use terms of censure which I can now wholly banish from my mind."

#### *Mr. Bradlaugh and the Oath.*

He was next troubled by the BRADLAUGH difficulty, a matter of

considerable, if mainly temporary, interest. The Member for Northampton asked to be allowed to affirm on the ground that the words of the oath, "So help me God," were a meaningless form to him. He was referred to the Courts of Law, which decided that he did not possess the right of affirmation. Thereupon, Mr. BRADLAUGH, somewhat indecently, expressed his readiness to take the oath, but the House declined to allow him to do so. He continued to be a thorn in the side of Ministers throughout their term of office, and brought upon them several humiliating defeats, culminating in the division by which the "Affirmation"—popularly called the "Bradlaugh Relief"—Bill was rejected in 1883.

#### *The Transvaal and Afghanistan.*

The Government soon found that it had created trouble for England in the Transvaal. As the Transvaal had been annexed by the Conservatives, Mr. GLADSTONE had of course denounced the annexation as "insane," and the Boers supposed that he would give them back their independence when he came into power. As soon as they found he had no such intention, they broke out into open revolt. The PREMIER, in bold words, said that he would not treat with them whilst they had arms in their hands, but the Boers defeated the British troops in several engagements, culminating in the battle of Laing's Nek, in January, 1881, and Majuba Hill in February. Thereupon, Mr. GLADSTONE discovered that to continue the struggle would involve blood-guiltiness, and conceded their independence on the condition that they recognised the QUEEN as their suzerain. Had he only made the discovery two months earlier, British prestige would not have been damaged by an unavenged defeat, and the lives of several hundred British soldiers might have been saved.

The Government next determined to reverse Lord BEACONSFIELD's policy in Afghanistan. As the result of the war in that country Candahar was in the hands of the British troops. Situated in a broad and fertile plain, it commands the route from Central Asia into India, and is a town of great commercial and military importance. It is the point where an invading army would concentrate before entering the passes which lead to India. Lord BEACONSFIELD intended to have annexed the town and to have connected it by railway with India, in order to enable English troops to be rapidly despatched into Afghanistan on an emergency. The Liberal Ministry pulled up several miles of the railway which had been already constructed, and "scuttled" out of Candahar. Military opinion was practically unanimous against the evacuation. In the case of Candahar, punishment did not follow so quickly on the blunder as in the Transvaal. But in 1884-5, when difficulties arose between England and Russia about the Afghan frontier, Mr. GLADSTONE found himself absolutely helpless. The Russians might have seized Herat long before any troops could have been despatched to oppose them. The Liberal Government was actually driven to relay, in 1884, the railway it had pulled up in 1881.

#### *Death of Lord Beaconsfield.*

Lord BEACONSFIELD took part in the debate in the House of Lords, on a resolution condemning the evacuation. He ended his speech with the words "The key of India is not in Candahar or Herat; the key of India is London." It was his last speech. For some time past his health had been very feeble, and at the end of March, 1881, he suffered from an attack of bronchitis. He sank gradually and died at 4 o'clock in the morning of

the 19th of April. There is much in his last days to attract a melancholy interest. Had he lived a few years longer he would have seen the turn of the tide, and would have died with the knowledge that the triumph of his principles must be speedy and complete. After having spent the best years of his life in the weary strife of parties, when power came to him he had at once taken his place amongst the great statesmen of Europe, the recognised equal of a BISMARCK, or a GORTSCHAKOFF. In the national crisis he had been the national leader, yet when the danger had passed he had been dethroned by rhetoricians who had neither his foresight nor his ability. But a just nemesis awaited his opponents. The inexorable logic of facts was to prove the accuracy of his judgment, and the falsehood of their criticisms.

#### *Lord Beaconsfield's Prophecy fulfilled in Ireland.*

In Ireland, Mr. GLADSTONE, refused to renew the Peace Preservation Act, and the causes of disorder foreseen by Lord BEACONSFIELD were allowed to work. The Land League began to establish its authority by the sanctions of crime and outrage. All that the Government would do was to introduce a Compensation for Disturbance Bill to place tenants evicted for non-payment of rent, in the same position as those leaving their holdings for other causes. The sums awarded as compensation for disturbance alone often amount to three or four years' rent. A bill temporarily suspending eviction where the tenant, through no fault of his own, is unable to pay, may be justified on the grounds of necessity, but a proposal to fine all landlords for exercising their rights, whether justly or unjustly, can scarcely be equitable. The Bill was thrown out in the House of

Lords. As the winter drew on, a reign of terror began in Ireland. Farmers and labourers, who disobeyed the orders of the League, were the principal victims. The landlords, as a class, being better able to take care of themselves, did not suffer so largely. In '79 agrarian outrages numbered only 863; in '80 they had increased to the terrible number of 2,590. Mr. FORSTER came to the conclusion that the Land League was responsible for this increase in crime, and in October he put Mr. PARNELL on his trial for seditious conspiracy. The evidence before him was strong. On January 6th, 1880, Mr. PARNELL had stated at Newark (New Jersey), "I think those people murdered yesterday will help us forward now." Again, on the 15th, at Brooklyn, he said, "It is impossible to suppose that the great cause can be won without shedding a drop of blood." Mr. M. HARRIS, M.P., declared at Galway on October 24th, "If the tenant farmers of Ireland shot down landlords as partridges are shot in the month of September, Matthew Harris would never say a word against them." It was, however, useless to expect an Irish jury to convict, and the prosecution failed.

#### *Irish Legislation in 1881.*

At last, Parliament was specially summoned (Jan. 6th) to consider a "Coercion" and Arms Bill, which gave the Lord Lieutenant three special powers. He could (1) proclaim disaffected districts; (2) arrest persons reasonably suspected of treason, violence, and intimidation; (3) take certain steps to prevent the importation, possession, and carrying of arms. The power of arrest was aimed, so Mr. FORSTER said in the House, at the "village ruffians" who formed the Land League police. There were obvious objections to the Bill, although its object was good. Any criminal enact-

ment for Ireland, to be successful, must make it easier to collect evidence and to secure conviction. Merc power of arrest was no terror to evil-doers, and bore the appearance of political coercion. The Bill was passed, after a bitter conflict, on March 2nd.

On April 7th, Mr. GLADSTONE introduced his Land Bill as a remedial measure to succeed the "Coercion" Bill. This Bill attached the tenant firmly to the soil. He could be evicted only for non-payment of rent. He could go to the Land Court and have his rent fixed for a term of 15 years. Lastly, he could sell his tenant-right in all cases, the landlord having a right of qualified veto on the new tenant. There were two fundamental objections to the Government proposals. In the first place, the Bill set up a system of dual ownership in land, *i.e.*, the tenant-right and the freehold, which is in itself most undesirable. Secondly, it reduced the landlord to the position of a rent-charger, and deprived him of all other interest in his estate. Thus its tendency was both to increase absenteeism, and to prevent any further reductions of rents in the event of a further fall in prices. If a tenant takes his landlord into Court and gets the rent judicially fixed, he cannot afterwards throw himself upon the generosity of his landlord. It was further urged, with justice, that as the tenant-right was carved out of the landlord's interest, confiscation of property took place without compensation. Leaseholders were excluded from the benefit of the Bill. It was intended as a message of peace to Ireland, but as such it signally failed. The idleness of the Government during the winter months of 1880 had enabled the League to establish itself firmly in Ireland, and the power gained by outrage was used to stop the

tenants from going into the Land Court.

*The Crimes and Arrears Act.*

The conviction was growing in the mind of the Ministers that they must strike at the Land League if their remedial efforts were to be successful. On January 28th, Mr. GLADSTONE had said, "With fatal and painful precision the steps of crime dogged the steps of the Land League." In the same month he declared that law had broken down in Ireland, with the consequence of "the servitude of good men, the impunity and supremacy of bad men." The Land Bill became law on August 16th. On October 8th, Mr. GLADSTONE, in a speech at Leeds, complained—"Mr. Parnell is very copious in his references to America. He has said America is the only friend of Ireland; but, in all his references to America, he has never found time to utter one word of disapproval of, or misgiving about, what is known as the assassination literature of that country." Mr. PARNELL, in reply, compared Mr. GLADSTONE to a small boy whistling as he goes through a churchyard, in order to keep up his spirits, and foretold that the time would come when Mr. GLADSTONE would eat all his big words, as he had about the Transvaal. On October the 14th, while Mr. GLADSTONE was speaking at the Lord Mayor's Banquet, a telegram was placed in his hands, "Our enemies," he cried in joyous tones, "have fallen, have fallen." Mr. PARNELL—"The man who has unhappily made himself beyond all others prominent in the attempt to destroy the authority of the law, to substitute what would end in being nothing more or less than anarchical oppression exercised upon the people of Ireland"—had been arrested as a suspect and shut up in Kilmainham, whither he was followed by several Land Leaguers.

The League responded with the "No Rent" manifesto. "Pay No Rent" says this ferocious document—"Pay No Rent, avoid the Land Court . . . Pay No Rent; the person who does should be visited with the severest sentence of social ostracism. Avoid the Land Court; cast out the person who enters it as a renegade to his country and the cause of his fellow men." In the first nine months of 1881, 2,700 outrages had taken place. One thousand five hundred outrages in the last three months were necessary to enforce the "No Rent" manifesto. This was too much for the patience of the Ministers. They proclaimed the Land League and locked up all its officials upon whom they could lay hands. Yet, in spite of these efforts, the Protection Act of 1881 was not very successful in checking crime. This partial failure of the Act was used by the *Pall Mall Gazette* and other papers as evidence that "coercion" was useless to stop crime, but we have seen that the real cause of ill success was the absence of necessary provisions. The whole plan of locking up suspects was bad. The law ought to have been modified in order to reach criminals, whilst the politicians might have been disregarded. Mr. FORSTER'S Act was really a "Coercion" Act in so far as it was directed against political agitation. Nevertheless, although outrages had increased in 1881 by nearly 2,000, the "No Rent" agitation and the attempt to keep the tenants out of the Land Court generally failed. In the first three months of 1882, outrages numbered 1,200. Mr. FORSTER stood firm as a rock, but the Government began to waver.

*The Kilmainham Treaty.*

In April, Captain O'SHEA had an interview with Mr. PARNELL in Kilmainham. He forwarded to the PRIME MINISTER a memorandum

of the conversation which, in its corrected form, ran as follows:—"What has been obtained is that the 'organisation,' which has been used to get up boycotting and outrages will now be used to put them down, and that there will be a union in the Liberal party. . . Parnell hoped to make use of a certain person (Sheridan) and get him back from abroad, as he would be able to help him to put down 'agitation,' as he knows all its details in the West." With the memorandum was a letter from Mr. PARNELL containing the following passage—"If the arrears question be settled upon the lines indicated by us, I have every confidence that the exertions which we should be able to make strenuously and unremittingly would be effective in stopping outrages and intimidations of all kinds." This "would enable us to co-operate cordially for the future with the Liberal party in forwarding Liberal principles." The last paragraph was suppressed by Captain O'SHEA, but produced by Mr. FORSTER. The Ministers took under their charge an Arrears Bill, every clause of which had been drafted by Mr. PARNELL in Kilmainham, and released the principal suspects. Mr. FORSTER resigned, because he declined to pay "black mail to law-breakers." This conduct of the Government, from the point of view both of morality and expediency, is utterly indefensible. Mr. PARNELL practically said to the Government, "If you will accept my Arrears Bill, I will assist in putting down outrages and will give you my support." The Government accepted the Bill and released its author, and yet Mr. GLADSTONE was bold enough to declare in the House of Commons that the release of the three members was "an act done without any negotiation, promise, or engagement whatsoever." The whole proceeding illustrates the

Liberal tactics which made Government impossible in Ireland. Mr. GLADSTONE imprisoned Mr. PARNELL as a suspected criminal in October, 1881, and in April, 1882, we find the "suspected criminal" admitted to the PRIME MINISTER's counsels and allowed to draft a Government measure. On May 6th, the country was deeply shocked by the murder of Lord FREDERICK CAVENDISH and Mr. BURKE in Phœnix Park. The Government then introduced the Crimes Act, which had been drafted some time before. The difficulty of securing convictions was met by change of venue and by special juries, and, if necessary, three judges might try certain criminal cases. Magistrates were empowered to examine witnesses when no one was in custody. Intimidation, boycotting, and rioting were made punishable by six months' imprisonment. Meetings could be prohibited and newspapers seized. The Act was effective. Outrages in 1882, as compared with 1881, showed a decrease of 1,000, and in 1883 a decrease of 3,569. The Crimes Act was followed by an Arrears Bill, and the sharpness of the crisis passed away.

#### *The "Fourth Party" and the Closure.*

The obstruction of the Irish members compelled the Government to deal with the Rules of Procedure. On February 20, 1882, Mr. GLADSTONE introduced his proposals, which embodied Closure by a bare majority, but, after the first stage, they were delayed until the Autumn Session. The Conservatives received the Closure with suspicion, partly because they believed it would endanger freedom of speech, but still more because they feared that the Government, which had already falsely accused them of obstruction, would make an oppressive use of its powers.

Sir STAFFORD NORTHCOTE preferred a proportional Closure. Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL argued that, if they were to have Closure at all, the bare majority was the fairest. On the whole, Sir STAFFORD NORTHCOTE seems to have been right. When new procedure is introduced into the House of Commons it should be surrounded by reasonable conditions and safeguards until experience has shown how it will work. At any rate, he practically carried his point. Lord RANDOLPH has, however, always been perfectly consistent in his preference for the Closure by a bare majority. Few Statesmen have ever risen to eminence so rapidly as Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL. He made his first great speech on the Bradlaugh question. He commonly acted with Sir DRUMMOND WOLFF, Mr. (subsequently Sir JOHN) GORST, and Mr. ARTHUR BALFOUR. The allies were nicknamed, half in jest, the "fourth party," but the Government found them energetic and formidable opponents. They gave to the Opposition that fire which was wanting in the amiable courtesy of Sir STAFFORD NORTHCOTE, and the Closure debates found them occupying a recognised and established position below the gangway.

### *The Egyptian Imbroglio.*

The Government had been warned that AHMED ARABI, a secret agent of ISMAIL PASHA, was likely to prove dangerous in Egypt. They paid no attention to the information, and, in September 1881, ARABI made a pronunciamento, and changed the Ministry. In February, 1882, he became Minister of War. The army became insubordinate, and life and property were insecure. An Anglo-French squadron was despatched early in May with a most salutary effect. But disorder again broke out after Lord GRANVILLE stated, on May 23rd,

that "it had never been intended to land troops or to resort to a military occupation," and another military rising replaced ARABI in power. On the 30th, Consul COOKSON telegraphed that "The small squadron actually in port can only silence the forts, and when they are disabled there will commence a period of great danger to Europeans, who will be at the mercy of soldiers exasperated by defeat, while the British Admiral cannot risk his men ashore, as the whole available force . . . does not exceed 300 men." The Government took no notice of this appeal. In June, riots broke out in Alexandria and many Europeans were massacred. At length, on July 10th, the English fleet, which was left in the lurch by the French, bombarded Alexandria. The Consul's prophecy was carried out to the letter. The forts were destroyed, but the Admiral had no troops to land. As a result, Alexandria for two days was given over to the plunder and rapine of ARABI's defeated soldiers, and suffered all the horrors of a sack. Half the town was reduced to ashes, and several millions compensation had afterwards to be paid, in consequence of the obstinate refusal of Lord GRANVILLE to take reasonable precautions. After bombarding Alexandria, the English Government was compelled to occupy it, and, after occupying the town, it was compelled to occupy the country. Blind and undecided, Ministers went on with stumbling steps, without a policy and without purpose. The dual control was abolished, 7,000 men were left as a garrison, and, for the time being, the country was pacified.

### *Snubbing the Colonies.*

In order to complete the gloom of the outlook abroad, it was only necessary to offend the Colonies. This duty Lord DERBY, both by his

temperament and by his manners, was eminently fitted to perform. Though a late member of Lord BEACONSFIELD's Cabinet, his conscience had allowed him to join the GLADSTONE Administration, and he was now Colonial Secretary. A modification of the MUNROE doctrine had spread to Australia and New Zealand, and the colonists were not unreasonably desirous of excluding foreign Governments from their neighbourhood. This feeling was much strengthened by the conduct of the French Government, which turned New Caledonia into a convict establishment, and flooded Australia with escaped criminals of the worst class. In 1883, great anxiety was felt by the colonists about the large and important island of New Guinea, and, on March 4th, 1883, the Queensland Government took possession. In April, the Premier of Queensland telegraphed, "All colonies heartily endorse our action. Assure Lord DERBY—no expense—Imperial exchequer." Lord DERBY himself stated in the House of Lords, "I have no doubt there is a strong feeling in Australia generally in favour of the annexation." But he could not make up his mind, though in June he thought that no other power wished to annex New Guinea. At last, on the 19th July, he wrote, "I am unable to approve of the proceedings of your Government," and quashed the annexation. In May, 1884, he was still confident that no foreign power contemplated interference, but in August the German Government expressed its intention of annexing the North coast, and carried out the annexation in December. The Queensland Government telegraphed, on hearing the news, "The relations of the Australasian colonies with Great Britain are likely to be seriously affected by a feeling of mistrust." The *Times* correspondent at Sydney wrote, "Lord Derby was of course

the first and chief object of the popular wrath. In infinitely varied phrase he was denounced as weak, shifty, imbecile, treacherous, and even a palpable promise-breaker."

### *The County Franchise.*

MR. GLADSTONE saw that something must be done to restore his dwindling popularity, and that he might take up the question of County Suffrage. The new electors would probably give their votes at the next General Election for the man who claimed to have enfranchised them, and it might be possible to conceal political incompetence behind the voting papers. DISRAELI, as we have seen, had admitted the principle of Household Suffrage for the Counties in 1874, and both parties were agreed in regard to it. On February 28th, 1884, Mr. GLADSTONE introduced his Franchise Bill. To the general surprise, it contained no redistribution scheme—an omission the more extraordinary owing to the special circumstances of the case. The Bill really enfranchised two classes of electors, agricultural labourers, and artisans living outside the old border line of their boroughs. Thus, unless the borough boundaries were extended in order to include the whole town population, the rural districts were in danger of being swamped by the urban vote. Mr. GLADSTONE admitted, as he was bound to do, that the Bill was incomplete, but argued that a complete Bill could not pass. His action was entirely opposed to every constitutional precedent. MR. GIBSON, now Lord ASHBOURNE, remarked, "All history is against the Prime Minister on this question; in 1832, 1854, 1858, 1859, and in 1860 the two questions were combined, and in 1866 the House compelled the Premier to combine them." The reason for the practice is obvious. If the franchise be conferred before redistribution is

considered, the Government is in a position to say, "If you do not accept our Redistribution scheme we shall abandon it, and go to the country with the new voters in the old constituencies." In this case, the Opposition could not prevent the party in power from "jerry-mandering" the constituencies by unfair redistribution of seats. Liberal leaders were themselves committed by their previous speeches to the doctrine that the two halves of a Reform Bill must be taken together. Lord HARTINGTON had said, on February 22nd, 1878, "I think my hon. friend (Mr. Trevelyan) has done well to bring these two subjects together before the House; because I believe . . . the House will insist, as it has done before, that the question shall not be dealt with partially but as a whole." Mr. BRIGHT had spoken still more strongly on January 17th, 1859, "The question of redistribution is the very soul of the question, and unless you get that you will be deceived." Sir CHARLES DILKE, on April 12th, 1877, had been equally plain — "The wise and honest course for those of us who desire both reforms is to connect them in our movement from the first." We must, therefore, conclude that the Government was despising constitutional precedent, was guilty of palpable and unblushing inconsistency, was deaf to the voices of expediency and justice, when it attempted to divide the Siamese twins, franchise and redistribution. Such was the ground the Conservatives took up. Lord JOHN MANNERS moved, as an amendment to the second reading, that the House would not proceed further with the Bill, "until it had before it the entire scheme," but was defeated. On July 7th, a similar amendment was carried in the House of Lords by Lord CAIRNS. In the course of the debate, Lord CARNARVON said, "The Bill extends

the suffrage largely, and I have no quarrel with it on that point, I am prepared to accept the basis of Household Suffrage." Lord SALISBURY was equally emphatic, "We shall be accused of desiring to keep these electors off the franchise. . . . I repudiate all such charges." A feeble, and now half-forgotten, agitation followed. Mr. GLADSTONE firmly refused either to dissolve or to produce his bill, but on November 17th he surrendered. The Redistribution Bill was settled by a Committee consisting of Lords SALISBURY and HARTINGTON, Mr. GLADSTONE, Sir S. NORTHCOTE, and Sir C. DILKE. The Bills, at length produced in proper form, became law in December. But the measure had already ceased to attract public interest. The Government had, practically, no other legislative proposals to make for the benefit of England. Sir W. HARcourt had produced a London Government Bill in April, which met with such universal condemnation that it was withdrawn in June.

### *The Betrayal of Gordon.*

The clash of arms was calling men's thoughts away from the wrangles at St. Stephen's. A religious pretender had appeared in the Soudan, and the whole province was ablaze; the KHEDIVE's authority being only maintained in the fortified towns dotted about the country. The British Government, through Lord DUFFERIN, advised the KHEDIVE to abandon the equatorial provinces and to acquiesce in the revolt, but this he declined to do. As the English were the real governors of Egypt, the moral responsibility for the KHEDIVE's action rested on them. They might either insist on the abandonment or aid in the conquest of the Soudan. The Government did neither, but simply washed its hands of the whole affair. HICKS PASHA, an English officer, was sent to his

fate in November, 1883, with some 10,000 Egyptians, not a man of whom ever returned. The Government having sacrificed all these lives in order to preserve a nominal freedom from responsibility, did not interfere to prevent another expedition being sent under BAKER PASHA, in December, which met a similar fate on February 4th, 1884. In January, 1884, Lord GRANVILLE, having at length screwed up sufficient determination, had insisted that the Soudan should be abandoned by Egypt. But here a further question arose. The Soudan was occupied by Egyptian garrisons, were these also to be abandoned? The Government determined to make some effort to get the unhappy Egyptian troops out of the country. On January 18th, they sent General GORDON, late Governor-General of the Soudan, to arrange for the evacuation, and to hand over the government to the MAHDI. On the career of that remarkable man it is not necessary to dwell here. To a sceptical and indifferent age his character presented all the qualities of a simpler and nobler type. Deeply versed in the theory and practice of scientific warfare, he yet possessed the simple piety and religious zeal of an old crusader. On February 8th, he reached Khartoum, the capital of the Soudan, and was enthusiastically received. He first suggested that he should have a personal interview with the MAHDI. Upon this being refused, he begged the Government to send up ZEBEHR PASHA, an influential Soudanese. The Government not only declined to despatch ZEBEHR, but marched a force out of Suakim to relieve Tokar and Sinkat. These towns had been taken some ten days previously, but several thousand Arabs were killed, and consequently all hopes of a peaceful settlement disappeared. Accordingly, GORDON begged Sir E. BARING to send 200

men to Wady-Halfa, or a small advance guard to Berber, saying, "It is not the number I want, but the prestige." This, too, the Government refused, giving GORDON free leave either to stay in Khartoum or to leave it. He stated in reply, that he would leave to the Government the indelible disgrace of abandoning the garrisons of the Soudan. Whatever happened, at least he would never "be taken alive." After the receipt of these telegrams, Mr. GLADSTONE said, on April 28th, "There is no military danger at present besetting Khartoum." And, subsequently, that General GORDON was "hemmed in, but not surrounded." For five months GORDON was left to his own resources at Khartoum, driven to rely on troops, 200 of whom were put to flight by a single Arab horseman. At length, in August, "preparations, as distinguished from operations," were taken to relieve him. With super-human efforts the British troops struggled up the Nile. At Gubat, after a forced march over the desert, they met GORDON's steamers waiting to convey them to Khartoum. The news reached England, and GORDON was looked upon as saved. In the midst of this exultation the reverse came with a harder blow. Sir CHARLES WILSON reached Khartoum on January 28th, 1885, only to find that the town had fallen two days before, and that GORDON was dead. He had been killed just outside the Government House. His head was struck off, and impaled on a butcher's hook, to be exposed to the insults of those who passed by. What happened to his body will never be known. He had held out for nearly a year, deprived of all external assistance and support. The Liberal Government had refused his every wish; the Liberal Government, by hair-splitting distinctions, had deluded the English people into a disbelief in his

danger; the Liberal Government had allowed six months to pass by without an attempt to relieve him, and, therefore, in the eyes of the world, it was responsible for GORDON's death. There are crimes, like the massacre of GLENCOE or the execution of Admiral BYNG, which are readily pardoned by co-temporary faction; but posterity is wiser, for it passes upon them a stern, an unrelenting, and a just condemnation. The desertion of General GORDON is of the same nature with them. His fate was rendered even more pathetic by the mean and despicable causes of which it was the result. A great man should fall by a great catastrophe. It is pitiful to see his life muddled away by selfish incompetence. His genius wasted, his career interrupted, CHARLES GORDON was only able to leave to his countrymen his name and his example. The loss of his services this nation may yet have to regret.

#### *Resignation of the Ministry.*

Popular feeling ran very strong against the Ministry. They were hooted when Parliament met in February, and only avoided a vote of censure by 302 to 288. But when, on April 30th, Mr. CHILDERS introduced his budget, showing an expenditure of £99,872,000 and a deficit of £14,932,000, the patience, even of Mr. GLADSTONE's House of Commons, was exhausted, and the Government was beaten by 264 to 252.\* Mr. GLADSTONE resigned, and Lord SALISBURY became Premier. Among Conservatives, there were many who thought that the

\* In the space at our command it is not possible to go fully into the finance of this period. It is marked by (1) gross extravagance; (2) A refusal to deal with local taxation; (3) Rash and unsuccessful experiments. During 1880-85 the Government introduced 30 new financial proposals, of which it had to withdraw 16. Mr. CHILDERS, in his last and fatal budget, proposed to cover his deficit by suspend-

Liberals should have been forced to appeal to the country without having purged themselves of their offences by a short period of opposition. There were divisions in the Liberal Cabinet which were, to some extent, healed by retirement from office. The Conservative Government, nevertheless, piloted many useful measures through the House. They passed bills creating a Secretary of State for Scotland, improving the housing of the working-classes, and extending the criminal law so as to afford further protection to young girls. Lord ASHBOURNE'S Act was intended to amend the Land Act by giving the Irish tenantry special facilities for buying the freehold. The Government has been principally criticised for not renewing the Crimes Act of 1882. The answer is very simple. No Government is called upon to attempt an impossibility. The Parnellites and a large body of Radicals strongly objected to the renewal of the Act. The Government was in a minority; the Session was nearly over; and the existence of Parliament was drawing to a close; under these circumstances only business of a non-controversial nature could be transacted. An unsuccessful attempt to renew the Crimes Act could only excite public opinion in Ireland, whilst it would not repress outrage. The Government having accomplished many useful reforms, in accordance with Parliamentary precedent, dissolved Parliament in the autumn and appealed to the country.

ing the Sinking Fund to the extent of £4,600,000, and by transferring £2,832,000 to 1886, thus ignoring the two main principles of Gladstonian finance: (1) That the Sinking Fund is sacred; (2) That the expenses of a year should be provided for out of the year's income. He proposed to leave wine alone, but to impose taxes of £1,650,000 on beer and spirits.

1885-87.

## THE BATTLE OF THE UNION.

*Lord Salisbury's Foreign Policy.*

**W**HILE the Government was, as we have seen, remarkably successful in its domestic legislation, Lord SALISBURY's Foreign Policy won the approval of the whole nation. He re-established friendly relations with the German Empire, which had been estranged by Mr. GLADSTONE's policy. "The Germans," wrote the Berlin correspondent of *The Times*, "wanted peace and repose, and the Liberal Prime Minister of England was constantly springing upon them harrowing questions of international moment, which threatened to shake all Europe to its foundations." Lord SALISBURY also succeeded in arranging for a time our differences with Russia on the question of the Afghan frontier. Nevertheless, he renewed our traditional friendship with the Ottoman Empire. His policy in the East was, as he said, "To uphold the Turkish Empire whenever it can be genuinely and healthily upheld; but whenever its rule is proved by events to be inconsistent with the welfare of populations, then to strive to cherish and foster strong self-sustaining nationalities, who shall make a genuine and important contribution to the future freedom and independence of Europe." Accordingly, he gave a ready approval to the movement in Eastern Roumelia for the union of the "two Bulgarias." In carrying out the annexation of Burmah, on the advice of the Indian Government, Lord SALISBURY was careful to avoid a quarrel with China. In view of the indisputable success of

the Conservative Ministers both at home and abroad, it did not seem improbable that they might obtain a long lease of power, and in the summer and autumn of 1885 most men were asking what alternative policy the Liberals could set forth.

*The "Unauthorised" Liberal Programme.*

The views of the extreme wing of the Liberal party had already been explained in detail in the notorious book entitled "The Radical Programme," to which Mr. CHAMBERLAIN contributed a preface. The book was remarkable not only for its revolutionary tendency, but for its sublime indifference to those principles of Political Economy that had been so dear to the old Manchester School. All "realised property" was to be "taxed according to a graduated scale." "A direct progressive tax," it was said, "on income and property is the lever to which we shall have to look for the social reforms of the future," and "taxation, on equitable principles, for objects which the nation approves, cannot be on too liberal a scale." The writer "readily admitted" that his views were "of a Socialistic tendency," but held that "the objections to State undertakings and interference become of diminished force when the Government is by the whole people." "Government by the whole people" was construed to mean "manhood suffrage." Members of Parliament were to be paid by the State. The House of Lords was to be abolished, apparently without substituting any other Second Chamber. "The last thing"—so ran the "Programme"—

"which any Radical would desire, or would dream of doing, is to reform the House of Lords in any way." As for the Monarchy, "so long as the functions of royalty are recognised as being ornamental and consultative, the throne has nothing to fear from Radicalism. Radicals have something else to do than to break butterflies on wheels."

### *The "Liberation" Society and the Church.*

But public attention was drawn chiefly to the proposals of the "Programme" in regard to the Church of England, which were based upon the infamous "Practical Suggestions" of the self-styled "Liberation Society." The Liberationists' scheme of Disestablishment involved the total destruction of the Church as an aggregate institution, and by Disendowment they proposed to take away most of the buildings, as well as the endowments, in the possession of the Church. Episcopal palaces, buildings appended to cathedrals, parsonages, and glebes were to be retained for public purposes or "for disposal." Cathedrals and abbeys were to be maintained for such purposes as Parliament might determine, and all churches existing before 1818 were to be vested in parochial boards, with power to deal with them for the benefit of the parishioners, including a power of sale. Every corporation, sole or aggregate, was to be dissolved, and no faculties were to be granted which would create "a privileged ecclesiastical body," as in Ireland. Even churches erected after 1818 were to become only the property of their congregations in trust.

### *Mr. Gladstone's Manifesto.*

The "authorised" programme of the Liberals proved to be of an extremely mild and harmless

character. It was contained in Mr. GLADSTONE's Election Manifesto of September 18th. He gave the first place to the reform of procedure in the House of Commons, on the ground that "this country will not in the full sense of the word be a self-governing country until the machinery of the House of Commons is amended." Next came Local Government, which he hoped to see "thoroughly representative and free." He declared himself in favour of Land Law reforms, including the abolition of entail, but would maintain "freedom of bequest." He was also anxious to see the balance of taxation readjusted between movable and immovable property, and still more between property and labour.

On the above subjects Mr. GLADSTONE believed the Liberal party to be "generally and firmly united," and he seemed unwilling to commit himself to the drastic "reforms" which were advocated by many of his supporters. If the House of Lords were reformed, he hoped "a reasonable share of power might be allowed, under wise conditions, to the principle of birth." With regard to Disestablishment, he said so vast a question could not become practical until it had been thoroughly discussed, nor could "such a change arise in a country such as ours except with a large observance of the principles of equity and liberality." On the Irish question, he remarked that "to maintain the supremacy of the Crown, the unity of the Empire, and all the authority of Parliament necessary for the conservation of that unity" was "the first duty of every representative of the people," though, "subject to that governing principle," "every grant to portions of the county of enlarged powers for the management of their own affairs" was, in his view, "not a source of danger, but a means of averting it."

*Mr. Gladstone in Midlothian.*

For some months the battle in the constituencies was fought on the question of the Church. It was found, in the autumn, that the Liberationists had brought such pressure to bear, through the caucus system, upon Liberal candidates, that most of them were pledged to Disestablishment. In September, it was reported that in England and Wales 374 Liberal candidates had declared in favour of Disestablishment, and only 31 against it. A vigorous defence of the Church was set on foot. Some candidates withdrew their pledges, and many of those who had been undecided came round to the side of the Church, while many others, who were too deeply committed to recede, discovered that their electoral prospects were destroyed. In his Midlothian campaign in November, Mr. GLADSTONE gave little encouragement to his Liberationist supporters. "The case of the English Church," he said, "instead of being a case in which there is nothing to say, is a case in which there is a great deal to say. Instead of being the mockery of a National Church, it is a Church with regard to which its defenders say that it has the adhesion and support of a very large majority of the people, and I confess I am very doubtful whether the allegation can be refuted. It is a Church which works very hard. It is a Church which is endeavouring to do its business, a Church that has infinite ramifications through the whole fabric and structure of society—a Church which has laid a deep hold upon many hearts as well as many minds." "Many of those who talk about Disestablishment in England, I think, know but little of the subject they are writing about. They frame plans of Disestablishment, plans utterly impossible to be entertained either at the present or at any other

time. I speak of a plan which has appeared in a work called 'The Radical Programme.' There is a programme of Disestablishment there which, even if the people of England made up their minds to disestablish, never could be adopted. But they have not made up their minds."

Mr. GLADSTONE also discussed at some length the relations between the Liberals and the Irish Home Rulers. He said:—"From one end of Great Britain to the other I trust there will not be a single representative returned to Parliament who for one moment would listen to any proposition tending to impair the visible and sensible Empire—the unity of the Empire. Whatever demands may be made on the part of Ireland, if they are to be entertained, they must be subject to the condition that the unity of the Empire shall be preserved, and that all the authority of Parliament—of the Imperial Parliament—which is necessary for maintaining the unity of the Empire, shall be steadfastly maintained. . . . Let me now suppose that the Liberal party might be returned to the coming Parliament—that is rather a staggering supposition—but I beg you to indulge me for an instant—might be returned to the coming Parliament in a minority, but in a minority which might become a majority by the aid of the Irish vote; I will suppose that owing to some cause the present Government has disappeared, and a Liberal party was called to deal with this great constitutional question of the government of Ireland, in a position where it was a minority dependent on the Irish vote for converting it into a majority. Now, gentlemen, I tell you seriously and solemnly, that though I believe the Liberal party to be honourable, patriotic, and trustworthy, in such a position as that it would not be safe for it

to enter on the consideration of a measure in respect to which, at the first step of its progress, it would be in the power of a party coming from Ireland to say, ‘Unless you do this and unless you do that we will turn you out to-morrow.’ . . . We believe it is essential for the public welfare that the party which may have to deal with Mr. Parnell, or to check and virtually govern the dealings with Mr. Parnell, should be a party not dependent upon his suffrages.”

*Mr. Parnell's Manifesto.*

On November 23rd, Mr. PARNELL and the leading Home Rulers issued an address to their supporters, in which they declared that “the Liberal party bound itself by most solemn pledges, and these it most flagrantly violated. It denounced coercion, and it practised a system of coercion more brutal than that of any previous Administration, Liberal or Tory. Under this system juries were packed with a shamelessness unprecedented even in Liberal Administrations, and innocent men were hung or sent to the living death of penal servitude; 1,200 men were imprisoned without trial, ladies were convicted under an obsolete Act directed against the degraded of their sex, and, for a period, every utterance of the popular Press and of the popular authority was as completely suppressed as if Ireland was Poland, and the Administration of England a Russian autocracy. The last declaration of Mr. Gladstone was that he intended to renew the very worst clauses of the Coercion Act of 1882; and if our long-delayed triumph had not turned the Liberal Government from office Lord Spencer would at this hour be in Dublin Castle, coercion would be triumphant in Ireland, and the landlords, instead of making the reasonable abatements demanded

by the depression of agriculture, and conceded by every landlord in England and Scotland, would be evicting wholesale, with the encouragement of Lord Spencer, and the backing of the police, soldiery, coercion magistrates, and filled gaols. . . . Under such circumstances, we feel bound to advise our countrymen to place no confidence in the Liberal or Radical party, and so far as in them lies to prevent the Government of the Empire falling into the hands of a party so perfidious, treacherous, and incompetent. We earnestly advise our countrymen to vote against the men who coerced Ireland, deluged Egypt with blood, menace religious liberty in the school, freedom of speech in Parliament, and promise to the country generally a repetition of the crimes and follies of the last Liberal Administration.”

*The General Election of 1885.*

The elections in November and December showed great Conservative gains in the boroughs, especially in great centres of population like Liverpool and Manchester, while in others where Liberals retained their seats, as at Glasgow and Birmingham, the Conservative vote was greatly increased. In the counties, however, the Conservatives sustained heavy losses. The agricultural labourers, having had no previous experience in elections, were in many parts of the country easily duped by the less scrupulous of the Radical agitators. Some of the Radical leaders had proposed to give power to popular representative authorities to obtain land at a “fair” value, and to let it for labourers’ allotments and small holdings. This proposal was set forth in specious language on Liberal platforms in order to catch the labourers’ vote, and many of the labourers believed that the

Liberal party was pledged to secure them free gifts of land. The cry of "three acres and a cow" now appears an ancient joke, but in the General Election of 1885 it was a powerful weapon in the hands of the Radicals. The final result of the elections was that the Conservatives numbered 249, the Liberals 333, and the Parnellites 86.

### *A Dishonest Policy.*

Mr. GLADSTONE was now in the position which he had expressed his anxiety to avoid. He could return to power only by means of the Parnellite vote in the House of Commons, and an alliance between the Liberals and the Home Rulers seemed impossible. In December, Sir W. HARCOURT said at Lowestoft:—"The Tories propose to govern the country by an intimate alliance with men who openly avowed their object was the dismemberment of Ireland from England. Was it possible the country was going to tolerate such a transaction? Liberals must not be in a hurry to turn the Tories out. He would let them for a few months stew in their own Parnellite juice, and when they stank in the nostrils of the country, as they would stink, then the country would fling them, discredited and disgraced, to the constituencies, and the nation would pronounce its final judgment upon them. They would hear no more of Tory reaction for many generations." But as the year drew to a close, rumours of Mr. GLADSTONE's conversion to Home Rule were widely circulated, though for a long time few would believe that he was capable of so sudden a change of front. At length, however, the rumours were confirmed by the press agencies, and the diplomatic form of Mr. GLADSTONE's disavowal was an additional confirmation of their truth.

### *Defeat of the Government.—The New Cabinet.*

In the meantime, the social condition of Ireland and the organised coercion set on foot by the National League engaged the anxious attention of the Government. On January 21st the QUEEN opened Parliament in person for the despatch of business, and the speech from the throne stated, "Although there has been during the last year no marked increase of serious crime, there is in many places a concerted resistance to the enforcement of legal obligations; and I regret that the practice of organised intimidation continues to exist. I have caused every exertion to be used for the detection and punishment of these crimes; and no effort will be spared on the part of my Government to protect my Irish subjects in the exercise of their legal rights and the enjoyment of individual liberty. If, as my information leads me to apprehend, the existing provisions of the law should prove to be inadequate to cope with these growing evils, I look with confidence to your willingness to invest my Government with all necessary powers." On January 26th, Sir M. H. BEACH followed up these expressions in the Queen's Speech by giving notice of a Bill for the suppression of the National League, but on the same day the Government was defeated on Mr. JESSE COLLINGS' amendment in favour of Agricultural Allotments and Small Holdings. Mr. CHAPLIN, while arguing that foreign experience told against small holdings, declared that the Government was fully alive to the importance of allotments. But it was clear that the amendment was a mere pretext to bring Liberals and Parnellites into the same lobby, and the device was successful. The Government resigned, and Mr. GLADSTONE was called upon to form his third

Administration. From the first several of his former colleagues, including Lord HARTINGTON, Mr. GOSCHEN, Mr. BRIGHT, Lord SELBORNE, the Duke of ARGYLL, Lord DERBY, Lord NORTHBROOK, Sir H. JAMES, and Mr. COURTNEY held aloof, and he was forced to admit to the Cabinet inferior politicians like Lord RIPON, Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, and Mr. MUNDELLA. Lord ABERDEEN became Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and Mr. JOHN MORLEY, an avowed Home Ruler, became Chief Secretary.

*Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill.*

Before Mr. GLADSTONE's proposals in reference to Ireland were announced, the Cabinet was still further weakened by the resignation of Mr. TREVELYAN and Mr. CHAMBERLAIN, and by the introduction of Mr. STANSFELD. At last, on April 8th, Mr. GLADSTONE moved for leave to introduce his "Government of Ireland Bill." He said that law was discredited in Ireland because it came to the people with a foreign aspect and in a foreign garb, and he proposed his Bill as an alternative to "coercion," in the hope that it would establish harmonious relations between Great Britain and Ireland. The essential conditions of his plan were, he said, that the unity of the Empire must not be disturbed, that Imperial burdens should be equitably distributed, and that there must be reasonable safeguards for the minority in Ireland. His Bill proposed the establishment of an Irish legislative body, with full powers to make laws for Ireland except upon certain specified subjects, whilst Irish Peers and Members were to cease attendance at Westminster. The chief excepted subjects were—the Crown and the succession; peace and war; the army and navy and the defences; foreign affairs; trade and navigation; and the establish-

ment or endowment of religion. The Irish Parliament was to be summoned and dissolved by the QUEEN, and its maximum duration was to be five years. The Executive Government was to be carried on by the LORD LIEUTENANT and Ministers appointed by the Crown. The legislative body was to consist of two orders—the first containing 103 members (of whom 75 were to be elected, on a property qualification of £200 a year, by electors owning or occupying property worth £25 a year, and 28 were to be Peers), and the second containing 204 members chosen by the existing constituencies. It might impose taxes, except customs and excise, in order to meet the cost of the public service in Ireland. Ireland was to contribute £4,200,000 annually to the Imperial revenue, and the Irish customs and excise duties were to be applied towards the Imperial charges. The Dublin police were to remain under the control of the Lord Lieutenant for two years, and afterwards until the Irish Legislature made some other provision. The existing judges were to be irremovable except upon an address from the two Houses of the Imperial Parliament, and civil servants were also to continue to hold their offices.

In the debate on the first reading, Mr. TREVELYAN explained that he had resigned because he could not consent to a wholesale surrender of the control of law and order to the representatives of the National League. He saw no finality in Mr. GLADSTONE's scheme, and believed total separation would be preferable to the long vista of contention between England and Ireland which the Bill opened out. Mr. CHAMBERLAIN justified his own resignation on similar grounds, and urged that by terminating Irish representation in the Imperial Parliament the scheme placed Ireland in a degrading position, which

must produce future ill-feeling and ultimate separation.

*The Land Purchase Bill.*

On April 16th, Mr. GLADSTONE moved the first reading of his Land Purchase Bill. He proposed to establish a "Statutory Authority" with powers to buy land and to sell it to the tenants. The measure of the price was to be the net rent after deducting out-goings, payable in Three Per Cent. Annuities. The tenant was to pay the "Statutory Authority" twenty times the amount of the gross rent, either at once or in forty-nine annual payments. The Land Commission was given large powers of varying the prices of land, and might refuse to purchase. All taxes levied by the Irish Parliament, together with the Customs and Excise and Land Revenues, were to be paid to a "Receiver-General of the Public Revenues of Ireland," who was (1) to discharge the Irish contribution to the Imperial Exchequer, (2) to pay all charges on the land revenues, and, lastly, (3) to pay any balance to the Irish Consolidated Fund. The purchase money was to be provided by the issue of £50,000,000 in Three Per Cent. Annuities, and to be repayable by the "Receiver-General" at 4 per cent. Mr. GLADSTONE at first declared that the Land Bill was "inseparable" from the Home Rule Bill, but the purchase scheme met with universal disapproval, and Mr. GLADSTONE has since admitted that the 'Siamese twinship' of the Bills is dissolved. It was shown that £50,000,000 would not suffice to buy out all the landlords of Ireland, and that £150,000,000 or £200,000,000 would be required for the purpose. If, again, Mr. GLADSTONE was right, and the landlords would elect to sell only to a limited extent, it was certain, as Mr. CHAMBERLAIN remarked, that we should obtain only "the

worst bargains." The Bill would have pledged the Imperial credit for enormous sums, which the Irish tenants perhaps would not have been able, and certainly would not have been willing, to repay.

*Final Defeat of Mr. Gladstone.*

On May 10th, Mr. GLADSTONE moved the second reading of the Government of Ireland Bill. He denied that he had ever declared Home Rule to be incompatible with the unity of the Empire. He urged that, in spite of the legislative remedies of three generations, the radical sentiment of the Irish people was not in sympathy with the law, and he hoped that his scheme would have the same good effect as the Canadian Constitution. He promised to give fair consideration to any proposal for the retention of Irish Representatives at Westminster. Lord HARTINGTON, in moving the rejection of the Bill, pointed out that the country had been given no opportunity of forming a judgment upon it, and that until the formation of the Government almost all Mr. GLADSTONE's colleagues were diametrically opposed to it. He opposed the Bill because it curtailed the authority of Parliament; because in regard to all internal affairs it destroyed the unity of the Empire; and because it afforded no real protection to the loyal minority, whose lives and property would be at the mercy of those whom Mr. GLADSTONE had denounced as the advocates of public plunder.

Two months elapsed before the division on the second reading, and in the meantime a series of efforts were made to overcome the objections of the Unionist Liberals. At a meeting of the Liberal party, on May 27th, Mr. GLADSTONE said that in supporting the second reading Members would only vote for the "principle of a separate legislature," that both Bills would be

withdrawn, and that before re-introducing them the Government would welcome amendments. The final debate took place on June 7th, when Mr. GLADSTONE and Mr. PARNELL attempted to answer Mr. GOSCHEN and Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH. Mr. GOSCHEN called attention to the confusion caused by Mr. GLADSTONE's explanations, and entered into a detailed examination of the provisions of the Bill. He showed that the supremacy of Parliament would be entirely dependent on clauses and conditions which could not be maintained. The fiscal, as well as the legislative, arrangements of the Bill were certain to lead to friction, and executive friction must lead to separation. GRATTAN's Parliament was no precedent, inasmuch as the Executive then constituted the link of union between the two countries. He made an earnest appeal to the new democracy not to be hustled into an irreparable breach of the foundations of the Constitution. Mr. PARNELL, on the other hand, declared that he was ready to accept the Parliament proposed in the Bill, and argued that, if the Nationalists abused their powers, the Imperial Parliament would have all the power of force to restrain them. Sir M. HICKS-BEACH contended that the policy of the Government was practically the policy of a single man, and had only been adopted because eighty-six Nationalists had been returned. The Irish Parliament would only be subordinate in theory, for the Imperial Parliament could not exercise a control which it had deliberately surrendered. The special enactments in regard to judges and others showed that the Government had not that "confidence in the Irish people" which it demanded from others. The loyal minority unanimously dreaded the unjust administration which the Bill would produce; and the Bill would

do away with all the advantages of the Union without satisfying national sentiment. The aim of the Conservatives was not party advantage, but to save the country from the greatest evil that had ever threatened it in the present generation. Mr. GLADSTONE, in closing the debate, insisted that the vote would be taken upon the principle of the Bill as apart from its particulars. That principle was the establishment of a legislative body for the management of Irish affairs. He implored members to "think well, think wisely, think, not for a moment, but for the years that are to come" before they rejected his proposal. Amidst a scene of breathless excitement the Bill was rejected by 341 to 311, the majority being composed of 247 Conservatives and 94 Liberals.

*The Victory of 1886—Lord Salisbury again Premier.*

Mr. GLADSTONE advised an immediate dissolution. The business of the Session was wound up with extraordinary despatch, and on June 25th the QUEEN dissolved Parliament. The battle in the constituencies was brief but decisive. The Liberals who remained faithful to their old traditions joined forces with the Conservatives, and the united party confidently entrusted their cause to the Imperial instincts of the people, and made a strong appeal to their sympathy with the loyalists of Ireland. On the other side, Mr. GLADSTONE, careless of everything but the success of the moment, appealed to the poor against the rich, the ignorant against the wise, "the masses" against "the classes," the Celt against the Saxon. He entered then upon the policy he still pursues, which consists in a deliberate attempt to excite those inter-racial jealousies which English statesmen have for centuries constantly endeavoured to allay. We

cannot yet fully estimate the harm done by this unscrupulous proceeding, but the result showed that Mr. GLADSTONE entirely mistook the English character. The pride of "the Southern English," as he has since contemptuously called them, took fire in a moment. London sounded the note of defiance which was caught up by the whole of England, and echoed, though faintly, beyond the Severn and the Tweed. The elections ended in a signal victory for the Unionists, whose majority was increased from 30 to 113. Mr. GLADSTONE was left at the head of 194 Separatist Liberals and 85 Parnellites, to face 318 Conservatives and 73 Unionist Liberals. Resignation, therefore, was the only course open to him, and the QUEEN sent for Lord SALISBURY. As the leader of by far the largest party in the popular chamber, Lord SALISBURY might fairly have accepted office at once, but, in order to remove any difficulties the Liberal Unionists might feel, he suggested that Lord HARTINGTON should form a Government, and offered to serve under him. The offer was not accepted, as Lord HARTINGTON preferred to give an independent support to a Conservative Administration, and Lord SALISBURY returned to power at the head of a Conservative Government supported by the brightest names in the Liberal party. The Irish policy of the new Ministers is now before the country. The Crimes Bill will re-establish law and order, and substitute the merciful government of the QUEEN for the cruel tyranny of the National League. Side by side with the protection of the law-abiding population goes remedial legislation on broad and generous lines. The Land Bill introduced by Lord CADOGAN aims at the redress of all the grievances of which honest tenants can complain, and the Land Purchase Scheme will deal with

agrarian difficulties at their source. But the QUEEN'S Government must be carried on, and remedial measures cannot have full effect until crime can be suppressed and contracts can be enforced.

### *Prospects of the Tory Party.*

Mr. GLADSTONE's Irish policy has for a time stopped the progress of legislation, but when Ireland no longer blocks the way, the Government is pledged to carry out a large and liberal domestic programme. The amendment of the procedure of the House of Commons makes the voice of the people through their representatives free and operative, and the questions which Parliament will be called upon to discuss are numerous and important. Lord HALSBURY'S reforms in the Land Laws will mark a great advance towards the freedom of land by the assimilation of the law of real and personal property, and towards the security of title by the extension of the system of registration. Lord SALISBURY'S Tithe Bill will settle, upon equitable terms, the controversy aroused by agitators in North Wales and elsewhere. The charges of Railway Companies for the carriage of goods are to be revised in the interests of home producers. A large and popular Local Government Bill, including a readjustment of local taxation, has been repeatedly promised by Ministers. Legislation to facilitate the acquisition of allotments by labourers is to be undertaken, and Lord CROSS' Glebe Lands Bill will place in the market a large number of suitable plots of ground. The destructive policy of the Radicals is well-nigh exhausted, and the constructive statesmanship of the Tories now holds the field. Both parties are, doubtless, equally anxious to secure the prosperity of the people, but while Radical politicians persist in setting class against class, and

race against race, they must leave to their opponents the whole province of harmonious legislation for the common good.

In foreign policy, Lord SALISBURY is beyond all comparison the greatest of English Statesmen. He has received, through the hands of Lord BEACONSFIELD, the traditional policy of England, and, like Lord BEACONSFIELD, he has proved no unworthy successor of the long line of illustrious Ministers who preceded them. In the distant future there looms the question of Imperial Federation, with which only a national and patriotic Ministry can fitly deal. Lord SALISBURY's Government has already shown its sympathy with the Federation Movement by convening the Colonial Conference, and the deliberations of the conference have brought the defensive union of the Empire within the range of practical polities. The development of Imperial feeling may yet substitute a British Zöllverein for our present system of one-sided Free Trade, and so realise the dream of Lord

DERBY in 1846. The political Federation of the Empire presents problems which will tax the resources of statesmanship to the utmost, and can hardly be accomplished by politicians whose minds are warped by the obsolete theories and narrow prejudices of Radicalism.

More than forty years have passed since Lord BEACONSFIELD predicted that Toryism would "rise from the tomb over which Bolingbroke shed his last tear, to bring back strength to the Crown, liberty to the subject, and to announce that power has only one duty—to secure the social welfare of the people." The prophecy has been fulfilled. In whatever direction we look—be it to the maintenance and consolidation of British power, or to the settlement of Irish difficulties, or to the redress of social grievances—the Radical party has no constructive policy to offer, and the Tory party must continue for many years to be the chief instrument of National and Imperial Progress.



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